



World Vision International 2022 Global Report on Child Participation in Decision-Making

Celebrating Children's Involvement in World Vision
Decision-Making Processes



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.

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PREFACE

Greetings, we are delighted to introduce the inaugural Global Report on Child Participation in World Vision Decision-Making. We believe that participation is not only a right of all children, but is an essential element of World Vision identity and vision for life in all its fullness for the most vulnerable children around the world. This report celebrates how boys and girls across World Vision field offices (FOs) have been engaged in the organisation's local and national decision-making processes, influencing our programmes, strategies, and the direction of World Vision for the better.

This report is a culmination of over a decade of serious engagement with children across our field and support offices. Over the past few years, child representatives have consistently demonstrated the value added by including boys and girls in organisational decision-making spaces from the local community level to national and international spaces. In 2019, World Vision Steering and Working Groups were commissioned to form the Operational Requirements for Child Participation in World Vision Decision-Making, which was then affirmed by our Executive Leadership Team. This first report is therefore a celebration of World Vision's commitment to the girls and boys by listening to their perspectives when making key decisions that affect them.

This report is also the beginning of a new chapter in World Vision where child participation in World Vision decision-making has been officially institutionalised and embedded into the organisation, with consistent reporting and clear lines of accountability. The Operational Requirements were structured to allow FOs to be creative in how they implement these requirements and what they report in their annual child participation reports, focusing on what is meaningful to them and how children have shaped the large and small decisions of the office. We have been so inspired by how creatively and thoughtfully so many FOs have taken ownership of this process – opening up wonderful and influential spaces for intergenerational dialogue and relationships. Though our efforts to strengthen child participation at World Vision include children's engagement in and

through programming, advocacy, and organisational decision-making spaces, this report focuses on the organisational decision-making aspect. The report follows a similar structure to that of the 55 individual FO child participation reports, summarising the trends and highlights from those reports, covering data from 2021-2022. It draws from what children have shared in processes such as the Annual Community Review and Planning (ACRP) meetings done in each area programme (AP), meetings between children and FO Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs), and Annual Strategy Review meetings.

This report is a significant step in our commitment to children's rights and is an organisational reflection of the inherent, God-given dignity present in all girls and boys. It is abundantly clear that children deeply desire to have a place at the table – but that participation is not simply their end goal. Rather, they consider their participation through an altruistic lens, seeing it as a way to make their communities better for their families and peers, to serve the most vulnerable among them, and to create a better world. Their motivations are pure, kind and Christ-like. May you be inspired by the voices of children.

Sincerely,



Dana Buzducea,

Partnership Leader, Advocacy & External Engagement



Bill Forbes,

Global Child Protection & Participation Sector Lead



CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON WORLD VISION PROGRAMMING

Children are World Vision's primary beneficiaries and can give us significant and unique insight into the impact that our programmes are or are not achieving. It is critical for Field Offices to ask children for their honest perspectives on what World Vision is doing locally and nationally, and to incorporate their opinions into current and future iterations of project and strategy design. Children can often give poignant reflection on who World Vision is in a community and how they treat or relate to young people. This section summarises what children around the world say is going well and what can be improved about World Vision's presence and programmes in the field.

WHAT CHILDREN SAY IS GOING WELL

1. Children feel positively about World Vision and say our projects do impact their well-being

Overwhelmingly, children reported positive feelings toward World Vision and listed numerous projects and activities that increased their well-being. Many reports specifically included references to children's positive sentiment about World Vision programmes – citing overall satisfaction, how World Vision has created hope especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and how their lives had changed for the better as a result of World Vision's presence in their communities.

"Children who participated in the meetings were happy that WV was present in their community, and that WV staff were friendly and understood their needs as much as their parents. They highlighted that WV catalyzed problem solving of difficult issues, influenced decisionmakers, demanded appropriate and timely actions, and aided in resolving challenges that many children face daily."

-Quote from WV Mongolia Report

"Children recognize that World Vision D.R.Congo Area Programs has contributed tremendously to their desired child wellbeing aspirations and collaborated with community, the government at different levels, community-based organizations, faith leaders and the community in general to successfully implement this wonderful work."

-Quote from WV DRC Report

Boys and girls displayed a deep understanding of World Vision projects across all sectors including water points and borehole construction, capacity building of parents on good nutritional practices, supporting children's spiritual nurture and education, assisting parents with vocational and livelihood training, and helping set up safe pathways for accessing justice after child protection violations. Children noted how these projects not only helped them as individuals, but positively impacted their families and the overall health of their wider communities.

"Children explained that parents are instilling moral values in the community for example, communities have developed a sense of compassion for the most vulnerable families and children, which did not exist prior to the implementation of the interventions, especially Empowered World View approach."

-Quote from WV Tanzania Report

2. Children's opinions are heard and taken seriously

In the majority of reports, boys and girls noted that World Vision not only listened to their opinions but also took them seriously, incorporating their perspectives into strategy decisions and programming that had a very visible, tangible output that children could see. Children's responses revealed important factors that fed into what it means to be taken seriously, such as feeling respected by adults, feeling that their presence and voices are valued, and having adults act on children's opinions in a practical way. The data also revealed that FOs are listening to children's voices in big and small decisions at all levels of programming and decision-making, demonstrating that no space is too small or large to incorporate children's voices.



"Boys and girls consulted value WV programming and consultative approach, stating that they especially value the fact that we act upon our promises (Act Now 2020 and Act Now Going Further report 2021) and do not 'simply disregard children's asks, but take them seriously, initiate actions and revert back to children with information.'"

-Quote from WV Bosnia and Herzegovina report

"During the meeting with SLT children, reported the big satisfaction they have towards the WV employees. 'We are treated as equals, we are always asked about different issues and our opinions are important for WV, we see it and we feel it.'"

-Quote from WV Georgia Report

3. Children value clubs and child-led spaces



Another aspect boys and girls say is going well is the existence of children's clubs and child-led spaces where children have the freedom to play, learn, feel safe, fight for their rights, experience spiritual nurture and express themselves. Nearly every FO has some form of children's club or group in their programming, and the reports revealed that children see these spaces as much more than simply a physical place to meet. These are spaces where boys and girls feel freedom to be themselves, are empowered to take action on child rights, can make friendships, and can participate in an inclusive and safe environment. These spaces tend to take on a variety of forms based on the communities' need and capacity, ranging from school clubs and peace clubs to more structured spaces like the child rights networks throughout the Latin America and Caribbean region.

"Children expressed their happiness for the very existence of the children groups and the opportunities that they are getting for the overall development because of their affiliation with Children Groups."

-Quote from WV India Report

"IMPACT clubs follow an annual life-skills curriculum and children appreciated these:

- *To learn new things, children readily remembered games and how reflecting on games was the best way to learn*
 - *To understand their rights and child protection services in the area*
 - *To make and meet new friends*
 - *To build healthy relationships and learn how to stop bullying*
- *As a place of inclusion for those with a disability, they felt accepted and were not discriminated against."*

-Quote from WV Timor Leste Report

4. Other aspects that children say are going well

Children cited a number of other aspects that they felt were positive about World Vision operations, demonstrating an awareness of World Vision's overall presence in the community. These aspects include:

- building trust and positive relationships or partnerships in the community
- strengthening the overall protective environment for children to feel safe
- helping children and adults understand their rights and responsibilities towards others.

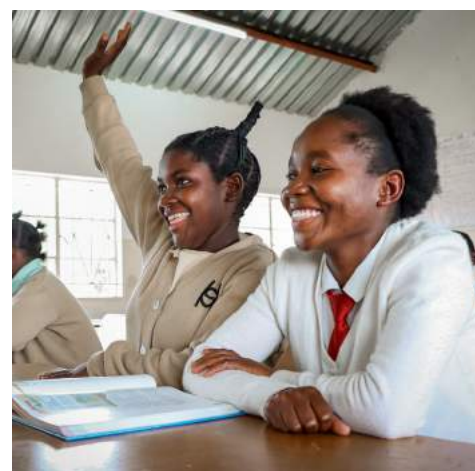
WHAT CHILDREN SAY CAN BE IMPROVED

1. Children have opinions on how all aspects of World Vision programming could be improved at the local level

Children had a wide range of views on general programming improvements that would impact child well-being and their families. These views range from broad asks such as supporting more local education opportunities and increasing livelihood trainings for youth, to very specific recommendations such as addressing latrine shortages in a specific school or providing improved seeds and equipment to help youth start their own businesses. Each FO child participation report includes context-relevant recommendations that can assist the FO Board/Advisory Council and SLT as they make local and national strategic decisions.

2. Children desire even more opportunities for leadership, voice and creativity

Whilst children say they are provided with opportunities to participate, they also often pointed toward ways that the tools, resources, capacity of staff and partners, and institutionalised spaces in the community still need to be improved if children are to be partners in decision-making. A large portion of the reports included comments from children stating that they wanted to be more involved in decision-making at community-level spaces such as schools, churches, local water committees, livelihood and health projects, and other typically adult-led groups. They requested that World Vision help to address cultural attitudes and assumptions about children and their capacity to participate. They also identified a lack of accountability to children on how their input shaped decisions.



“Programs in Mali need to work with children and adult community leaders to get village leadership (village chief, councilors) to consult with children and take their opinions and views into account when making decisions that affect the village: ‘We are not consulted for village decisions, we are only informed. And others specify: ‘Our ideas are not very often taken into account at the community level concerning certain decisions about the village, child marriage...’”

-Quote from WV Mali Report

“Children suggested that they be involved in community development processes by the community elders so that their issues are fully represented and well-articulated according to their experiences. Children felt community leaders were not adequately supportive of children’s participation in community meetings and seemed not to be ready to groom them into future leaders by trusting them to co-decide on critical community issues.”

-Quote from WV Zimbabwe Report

The FO reports indicate that boys and girls have a deep desire to be involved in community decisions that affect their day-to-day lives, in addition to World Vision decision-making spaces. They want to contribute to making their villages, cities and countries a better place for all children and to not be left on the margins when adults are shaping the future of their communities.

3. Children do not want us to abandon the fight against violence

A large portion of the FO reports included comments from children specifically asking World Vision to continue working to end violence against children. Children spoke in detail about how they would like World Vision to continue strengthening reporting and referral mechanisms for children to use when they experience or observe child protection violations. They suggested that these mechanisms need to be much more child-friendly and utilise a variety of coordinated methods for children to report, depending on their situation and comfort level. Additionally, it is not enough that these mechanisms simply exist, but intentional efforts need to be made to socialise and train children and parents on how to use them effectively.



“One of the issues of greatest concern to children, adolescents and youth in Mexico is violence. In this regard, the perspectives of children are:

-41.42% of girls, boys and adolescents recommend creating and strengthening mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence against children

-34.4% of children and adolescents recommend orienting their proposals by providing recommendations to other children and adolescents who are experiencing a situation of violence, encouraging them to file complaints;

- 24.18% focus their responses on the importance of having access to and strengthening justice systems through punitive measures.”

-Quote from WV Mexico Report (translated)

“Since the military takeover, Myanmar’s Child Protection mechanisms have been dismantled, which was raised as a cause of concern by many children across our ministry. Children claimed witnessing an increase in Child Protection incidents while feedback and complaint mechanisms were no longer available to them, which was extremely frustrating.”

-Quote from WV Myanmar Report

4. Children are concerned about the most vulnerable and children with disabilities

The reports revealed that boys and girls are concerned not only for themselves, but for the most vulnerable among them. For example, many reports cited very specific suggestions for World Vision APs to organise more programming for children with disabilities and their families – from specific interventions, to supporting children with physiotherapy, to awareness raising to create a more inclusive and accepting atmosphere for their friends with disabilities.

“When children refer to the problems in their communities, they raise with greater concern those affecting children and adults with disabilities; children living in broken families; migrant children; children who suffer discrimination or harassment; children who have lost their parents in the pandemic; children who have started consuming alcohol or drugs at an early age, children suffering from depression, migrant families. When they refer to these situations, they speak to us out of empathy, out of companionship, they question themselves about what more they could do and challenge us to prioritize together our actions to address these situations of greater vulnerability.”

-Quote from WV Bolivia Report (translated)



5. Other notable comments

Other significant comments from children throughout the reports include:

- **More investment in mental health and psychosocial support:** Poverty, conflict, disaster, violence and the COVID-19 pandemic have all contributed to a decline in young people's mental health. Many of the reports included specific recommendations for increasing mental health support.
- **Expanding programming coverage:** Similarly, reports revealed that children are concerned that World Vision programming is not reaching enough children in their communities, especially families who are isolated due to location, disability or discrimination.
- **Including relevant topics in children's clubs:** Whilst some children enjoy clubs such as IMPACT+ and Peace Road, many others participate in clubs where there is little structured content that meet their needs. The reports revealed that young people are interested in topics such as vocational training or upskilling of transferrable skills, psychosocial support, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, and simple recreational or creative activities.





IMPACT OF CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

While World Vision has made significant strides to include boys and girls in decision-making spaces in the last decade, it is equally important to uncover the impact that child participation has in children's lives. Participation is a right in itself, but is it making a meaningful difference in the way children experience World Vision programmes and in their overall well-being? This section examines how child participation in World Vision decision-making processes has positively impacted local-level programming decisions, FO decisions, and the personal lives of boys and girls.

IMPACT ON LOCAL-LEVEL PROGRAMMING DECISIONS

1. Shaping World Vision project scope, planning or budgeting decisions

The majority of reports explicitly mentioned examples of how involving children in local area programme decision-making processes helped to shape the programme or project's scope, budget, design or experience. This occurred through processes such as the Annual Community Review and Planning (ACRP) meetings, baseline or needs assessments at the beginning of a programme, or mid-term/end-of-project evaluations. Children's perspectives were commonly used to inform the overall focus of a Technical Programme or project, determine appropriate target numbers or methods to engage other children, or select partners to work with in implementation.

"Views of the children are considered during the planning and budgeting processes. For example, children have requested World Vision to reach children in hard-to-reach communities. World Vision is gradually decentralizing trainings and holding them at community level so as to reach more children."

-Quote from WV Sierra Leone Report

"As a result of the meetings held with the children and youth we were able to integrate in our planning activities that respond to their requirements. For example, the children recommended that activities to address issues of violence be approached in a more straightforward and less technical way and that parents and adults of the community participate in joint activities. As a result, the organization is implementing two methodologies: Peace Road and IMPACT+, which allow participants to develop learning projects on violence prevention and promotion of a Culture of Peace, where the participation of parents and adults in the community is essential to close the project."

-Quote from WV Dominican Republic Report (translated)

Additionally, reports mentioned how children's input directly shaped very specific choices of activities such as location for water points or activities that children experience in a Child Friendly Space (CFS).

"We do not feel safe because of the challenges we face in our village. We walk long distance to school and to fetch water it's very scary and we sometimes miss school looking for water to be used at home and animals," said Ester. This girl's voice led to allocation of budget for borehole drilling to respond to water challenges in that area."

-Quote from WV Tanzania Report

"Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) resumed in emergency response but integrated with psychosocial packages to manage the impact of COVID-19 as had been recommended by children. In these CFS is Structured Play and Psychosocial support activities, Games and Sports, Individual and Group counselling sessions, Life skills (different types), etc."

-Quote from WV Uganda Report



2. Influencing local authorities that World Vision partners with

Part of World Vision’s approach at the field level is to implement programmes in partnership with local partners such as community-based organisations, faith leaders, parent groups and local authorities. Many reports detailed how children’s participation in World Vision decision-making processes actually influenced the decisions and plans of local authorities due to World Vision’s strong local footprint and promotion of children’s perspectives in the community. This speaks not only to the wide-ranging, positive effect of children’s participation but also to the potential of World Vision as a catalyst in communities for further amplification of children’s voices and recognition of their value and lived experiences.

“CESP [Community Engagement and Sponsorship Plan] promotes the strengthening of the community social fabric, promoting the development approach based on the welfare of children, thus encouraging greater participation of children and youth in local development processes, opening more and more spaces and participation of children in an adult-centred culture where the voice of children and youth is not heard or considered.”

-Quote from WV Honduras Report (Translated)

“As part of child led advocacy, 195 budget petitions submitted in local government institutions that resulted to the amount of allocation of USD\$ 795,151 as per commitment which covered 427,176 children. WVB and Child Forum became role model to community in preventing significant numbers of child marriages and child violence. For example, few UNO offices provided separate room for children to conduct monthly meeting to discuss about children problem.”

-Quote from WV Bangladesh Report

IMPACT ON NATIONAL-LEVEL DECISIONS

1. Shaping field office strategies

Across the reports, FOs gave examples of how boys and girls contributed to the design, review or refreshing of their office strategies. This happened through a combination of children giving input into Annual Strategy Review processes, strategy development conversations and workshops; integrating children’s opinions collected from various events and conversations; and ensuring children’s perspectives informed the office’s “It Takes a World” campaign strategies. Across the world, the insight of boys and girls are informing the direction of World Vision in big and small ways.



"In the process of WVI-C's new strategy development FY23-27, 246 child representatives (147 girls) were engaged and provided inputs and recommendations directly to WVI-C leaders and staff reflecting on their experiences participating in programmes/projects/activities and in ACRP processes, a total of 774 children representatives (433 girls) including 242 Most Vulnerable Children and 425 registered children directly participated."

-Quote from WV Cambodia Report

"Meanwhile, in year 2021, WVL carried out a series of consultative meetings with children to acquire their opinion that would be useful in improving WVL's programmes and shaping its strategies. These consultations took place in all the current AP locations and leaders of children's clubs in the APs met over 3 to 4 times with this purpose in mind. Here, approximately 400 child leaders representing over 350 children's clubs participated in these meetings."

-Quote from WV Sri Lanka Report

2. Shaping national child and youth strategies

Again, reports indicate that participation in World Vision national decision-making processes can potentially have a positive influence on country-wide decisions that affect boys and girls. Several reports mentioned how World Vision leadership involved other national stakeholders during their listening sessions, leading to children's voices influencing national-level strategies that would benefit young people on a larger scale, well beyond the scope of World Vision spaces and programmes.

"Apart from listening to children's voices internally within the organization, we have prioritized including our stakeholders during meetings with children. One of them was 'The Future from Today,' a national child-led forum organized on April 5th, 2022, involving decision-makers. The event was co-jointly organized with adolescent representatives, nine boys and nine girls, from Tuv Province and UB city. They represented their peers, relayed their messages to decision-makers, and spoke about upholding the rights of Mongolian children and collaborative opportunities to end violence against children."

-Quote from WV Mongolia Report

"Moreover, in the framework of drafting the National Strategy for Youth, dedicated to all young people 15-29 years of age in the country, WVA has been an active actor in engaging young people to provide substantial input and recommendations for improving the document. As such, IMPACT Clubs from all APs were involved in the final consultation process of the drafted document of the Strategy organized on March 19th and 20th in Korca (the City of Children)."

-Quote from WV Albania Report

IMPACT ON THE PERSONAL LIVES OF CHILDREN

1. Participation helped children build essential life skills

The most commonly cited personal impact of involving boys and girls in World Vision decision-making processes was an increase in various life skills. Reports indicated that children saw a positive shift in their self-confidence, problem-solving abilities, negotiation tactics and leadership abilities. This shows that true participation not only benefits programmes and projects but also the individual children who take part as well.

"I was a very shy person, since I was a child, but getting involved in these spaces gave me to show that I have a lot of capacity, that I can do many things so that children like me, also feel empowered."

-Quote from WV Dominican Republic Report
(Translated)

"Children indicated that, involving them in the child participation forum has instilled confidence in them with regards to expressing their views on interventions that promote their well-being."

-Quote from WV Zambia Report

2. Participation increased children's positive relationships

Interestingly, many reports noted that children's relationships with other adults in the community seemed to improve as a result of their involvement in decision-making spaces. Trust and respect were built between children and caregivers, among other adult stakeholders in the community, and among children themselves.



"Children's participation is positive in communities for children's health. It improves the living conditions of parents, preventing parents from dropping their children off at school and marrying them off early. The children testified to the benefits of their participation in the activities: 'Participation has helped change our lives,' said one of them. This initiative has allowed the children to build and improve relationships with each other, and also to become more cohesive."

-Quote from WV Niger Report (Translated)

"The network gave me the opportunity to meet friends from other regions of the country, exchange experiences and broaden my perspective. It taught me to respect people for their dignity and to believe in our work in favour of children and adolescents."

-Quote from WV Peru Report

3. Participation helped children be recognised as role models and partners in the community

The more frequently boys and girls are included in decision-making, the more they are perceived as capable, respected stakeholders and partners in other spaces. Several reports revealed that participation helped children be seen as respected role models and essential contributors to the community.

"Bringing children to the centre of their wellbeing decisions and World Vision's presence in the villages has increased children's participation in village decision making. The communities and the Government counterpart in most villages now wait to hear the children's perspective from the consultation activities in the village planning or review of the activities. It has been made mandatory to have the perspective of the MVC and their households in the meetings with children, women, and elders."

-Quote from WV Laos PDR Report





SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE CHILD PARTICIPATION DATA

The following are specific metrics on child participation in decision-making that will be tracked over time as an organisation. The numbers and data below are based on what was reported in FO reports as well as several operational dashboards.

CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN AREA PROGRAMME ACRP MEETINGS

An AP's Annual Community Review and Planning (ACRP) meeting is a chance for World Vision, local partners, and community members to review the year's work in the community, give feedback and plan for the following year. Between FY20 and FY21, the percentage of total APs that either meaningfully involved children or where children participated in some aspects of the ACRP meetings increased from 19 per cent to 89 per cent (Figure 1). The regional comparison for FY21 reveals that most regions are involving children in some way during these local decision-making spaces (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Yearly comparison of number and percentage of APs that involved children in ACRP meetings

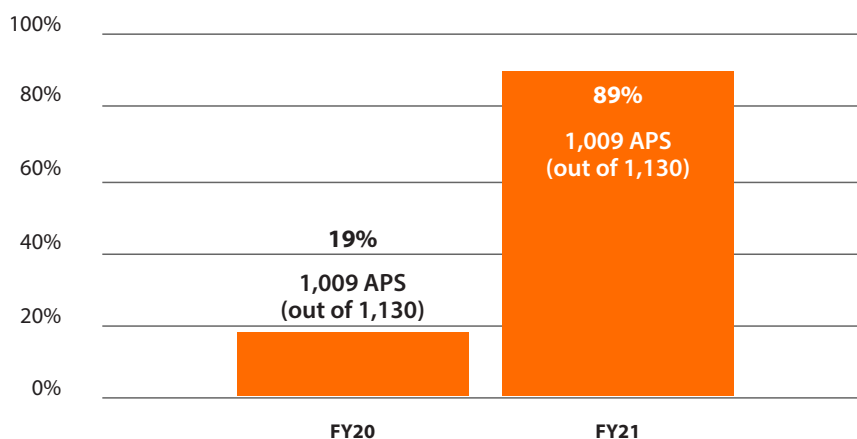
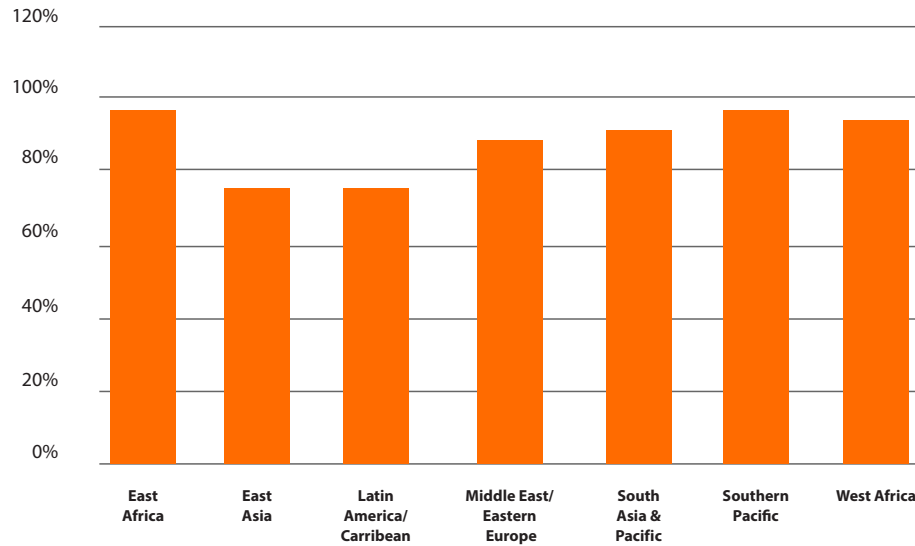


Figure 2. Regional comparison of percentage of Aps that involved children in ACRP meetings

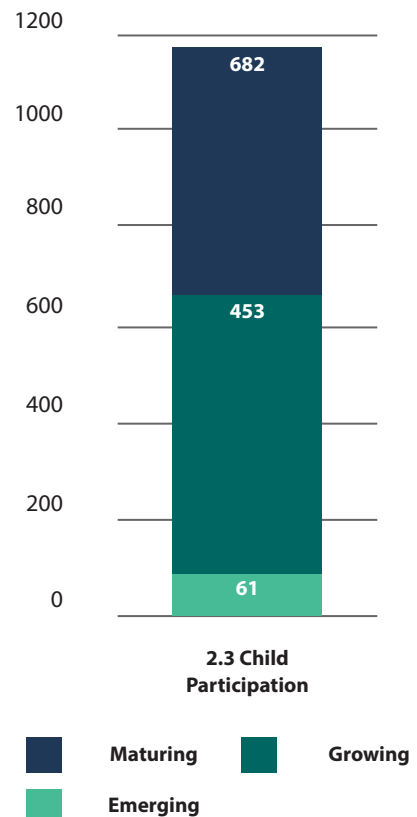


CHILD PARTICIPATION PQSRT RATINGS

The child participation data from the FY21 Programme Quality Self Review Tool (PQSRT) revealed the following (Figure 3):

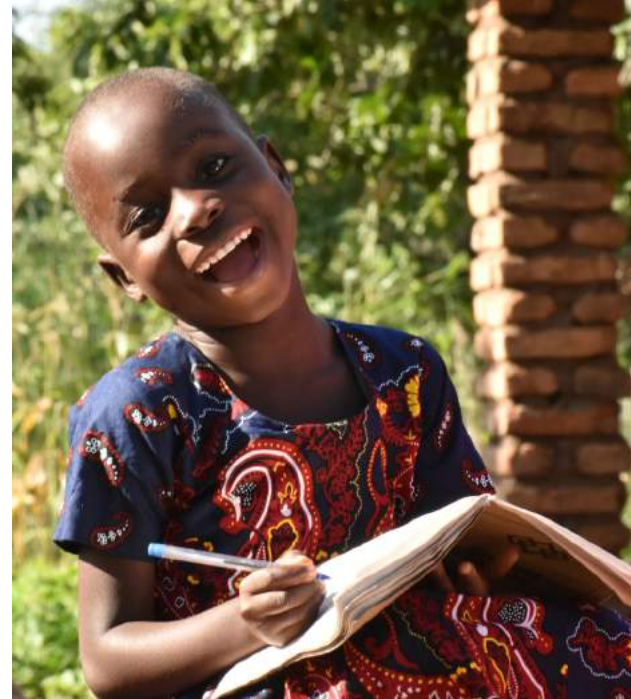
- 61 APs (5%) are in the Emerging category:** Most children do not see themselves as agents of change and their opinions are not routinely sought by local, municipal, regional or national decision makers. The programme is beginning to empower and include children in decisions that affect their lives.*
- 453 APs (38%) are in the Growing category:** Children from a few sections of society see themselves as agents of change and report that their opinions are sought by local, municipal, regional or national decision makers. Staff, community and partners occasionally, but not systematically, empower children, build their capacity and create opportunities for them to participate in age-appropriate ways in the design, implementation and monitoring of activities that affect their lives.
- 682 APs (57%) are in the Maturing category:** Children and adolescents from many sections of society see themselves as agents of change and report that their opinions are sought and incorporated by local, municipal, regional or national decision makers. Staff, community and partners routinely empower children, build their capacity and create opportunities for them to participate in age-appropriate ways in the design, implementation and monitoring of activities that affect their lives.

Figure 3. FY21 PQSRT Results for Child Participation, out of 1,197 APs



CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN DESIGN AND EVALUATION

FO reports varied in what they documented regarding children's involvement in design and evaluation of specific projects and larger Technical Programmes. Based on what was reported, a total of **5,770** boys and girls participated in project or programme design, while **52,900** participated in evaluations. These numbers reflect data from 25 FOs that reported available quantitative data, out of the 55 FOs who produced an annual report.



CHALLENGES FACED AND ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

Involving boys and girls meaningfully needs to be a continually evolving process, taking lessons learned from years past and improving for the future. This section is a summary of common challenges that FOs reported facing when involving children in local and national decision-making processes, as well as a summary of the most common actions that they plan to take to maintain the organisational commitment to listening to children.

CHALLENGES FACED

1. Access to children, especially the most vulnerable

By far the most commonly cited challenge in the past two years was limited access to children due to the COVID-19 pandemic, political turmoil, and ongoing conflict. Lockdowns, security measures, fuel crises and unequal access to online connectivity issues made it difficult for adults to physically get to children or hear their concerns. Offices did their best to adapt to these challenges by implementing reduced contact measures and offering virtual or hybrid options to connect. Despite their efforts, these challenges deepened systemic vulnerabilities and made it extremely difficult to listen to the most vulnerable boys and girls equally across area programmes.

"The pandemic has represented a strong challenge in the processes of child participation. The digital divides represented by access to cell phones with internet connection and their safe use, hindered equal access to spaces for participation."

-Quote from WV Boliva Report (Translated)

2. Cultural norms

The data revealed another common challenge across FOs – concerned parents and cultural norms that hinder the engagement of boys and girls in decision-making spaces. Many reports noted that community perceptions of children as inexperienced, too young or limited in knowledge prevented adults from taking child participation seriously. For example, Zimbabwe’s report cited that culturally, children do not sit with adults in decision-making meetings, while Sri Lanka reported that many adults consider it disrespectful when children challenge adult statements. Many reports from the Latin American and Caribbean Region (LACR) cite the issue of “adult-centric views,” or the centring of adult preferences and opinions over children’s in these spaces.

“Another challenge is to sensitize adults to a self-evaluation regarding the concept they have about children’s participation in organizational decision-making. Our adult-centric profile leads us to such a practical way of thinking that we get used to treating programming, from its planning to its evaluation, as something that is only for adults and at least for young people, and that due to the acceleration to respond to requirements and meet deadlines, we relegate a different way of doing things, which requires a more child-friendly exercise and language, to a second plan.”

-Quote from WV Brazil Report

Other reports revealed an unequal availability between boys and girls, with girls being more culturally restricted from these spaces due to cultural beliefs about their role in household chores, isolation during menstruation and violations like early marriage. Finally, specific countries dealing with political tensions report anxiety among parents to allow their children to speak up on various issues for fear of reprisal.

“With heightened challenges there is growing uneasiness for communities and children, in particular to speak freely and openly about issues affecting them, especially those linked to the political turmoil for instance protracted school closures, disruption of Child Protection systems and increasing physical insecurity.”

-Quote from WV Myanmar Report

The majority of offices state that the most consistent way to counter these challenges is to provide more awareness and sensitisation to parents, caregivers, teachers and other adult decision-makers in the community. In addition, the more exposure that adults have to children competently and effectively participating in World Vision decision-making processes, the easier it will be over time to accept their voices in other spaces.



3. Other noteworthy challenges

Other difficulties cited by FOs include:

- Budget and capacity of staff to include children's voices consistently
- Inclusion of children with disabilities
- Lack of opportunities to include children's voices.

ACTIONS PLANNED

1. Increase ongoing engagement of children

The majority of offices reported that there were big and small actions they will take in the coming year to increase the engagement of boys and girls in decision-making spaces, building off of what has already been established. These actions range from increasing the frequency of involving boys and girls ahead of project proposals or grant applications, aiming for more APs to include children in their ACRP meetings each year, and committing to engage children with SLT and Board/Advisory Council visits on a more regular basis in formal and informal ways. Some offices will commit to connecting children with stakeholders and community decision-makers to amplify the voices of children even more.



"We have the challenge of seeking better and different ways to incorporate the participation of children and adolescents in the organization's governing bodies; to move from a consultative participation, where their opinion is not only asked for, to a collaborative participation, where an intergenerational dialogue is strengthened and things are done together, until finally consolidating a protagonist participation where girls and boys can lead processes with our collaboration and accompaniment."

-Quote from WV Peru Report (Translated)

2. Increase accountability to children

One of the most difficult yet crucial aspects of meaningful participation is to close the feedback loop and be accountable to the children who gave input into various decisions. It's even harder to do this in a child-friendly, timely way so that boys and girls understand how their suggestions were used or not in the final decision. Several offices noted this as an area in need of more attention in the next fiscal year. It is an essential part of motivating boys and girls to continue giving input.

3. Build the capacity of staff, partners and children in meaningful participation

Many offices reported that they plan to invest in capacity building for adults and children to make child participation even better in the years to come. For children, offices listed a variety of skills they hoped to increase in boys and girls, such as project management skills, leadership ability, and data collection and analysis so that other children are represented more effectively. This shows how offices are investing in more than simply bringing children to the table but also ensuring that they have the confidence and skills to participate effectively.

Similarly, the majority of reports indicated the need to strengthen adult capacity to listen to children, starting with World Vision staff members. Among the skills mentioned, reports included strengthening active listening skills, how to discern where and when to incorporate more of children's voices, and how to coach children without telling them explicitly what to say.



CONCLUSION

This first Global Child Participation in World Vision Decision-Making Report is an important step in celebrating the efforts of FOs and in institutionalising the participation of boys and girls in the decisions that World Vision makes at local and national levels. World Vision has made intentional steps to document how children have shaped our programming and strategic decisions, and in doing so has better defined what **meaningful** child participation actually is. Additionally, we are able to understand more about **how** offices are implementing the Operational Requirements and the **impact** that child participation has on local programming decisions, national level strategies, and the personal lives of children.

It is important to note that in the midst of the Operational Requirements, meetings with children, and reporting, children and adults are building strong relationships with one another in the pursuit of a greater goal for their communities. Without these positive relationships based on mutual respect and listening, participation can become utilitarian, tokenistic, and extractive. For children, participating in decision-making has value beyond the act itself. It is not only a fundamental child right, but an essential step in taking action, caring for each other, and serving the most vulnerable among them.

This is the direction World Vision is heading with the Operational Requirements – that 100 per cent of APs include children in local planning meetings and 100 percent of FOs foster intergenerational dialogue between adults and children for strategic decision-making to increase child well-being. We are setting the foundation for children’s voices to influence our organisation – giving them the space to let us know their priorities, what can be improved and how we can do better to achieve child well-being for vulnerable children.





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.

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