



**It takes a world**  
to end violence against children

World Vision

# CHILD-LED RESEARCH

An Essential Approach for  
Ending Violence Against Children



# What is CHILD-LED RESEARCH?

Child-led Research is a participatory project that aims to engage with children and young people to conduct pieces of research on related issues that matter to them.

This methodology provides opportunities for children and young people to raise their voices and contribute their views and results of their research to the World Vision campaign to End Violence Against Children.

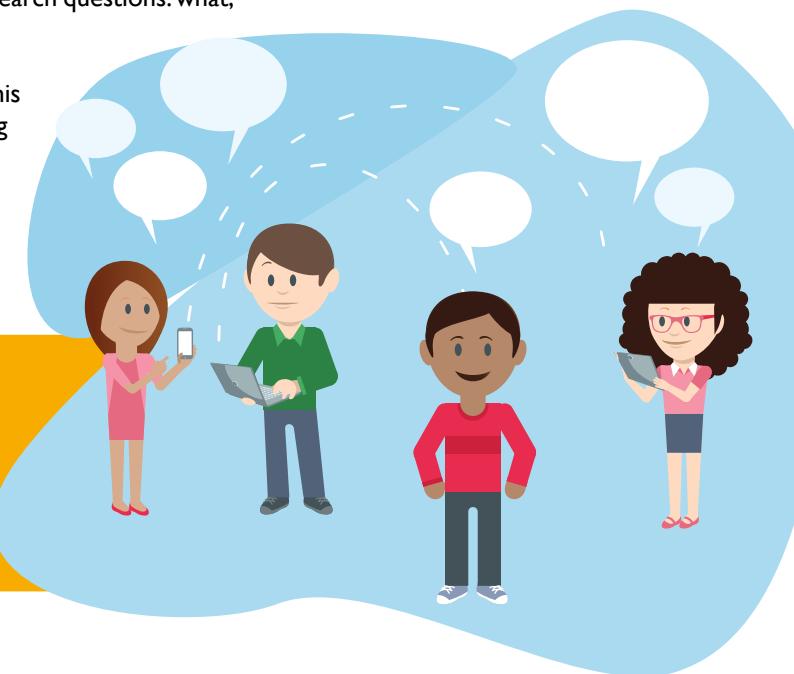
Child-led Research also provides children and young people with new avenues to influence decision-making by using their findings to put pressure on stakeholders and decision-makers on issues that are relevant to them. This model promotes a shift and change of focus as children and young people undertake their own research projects rather than being the subjects of the research.

Throughout this process, young researchers are able to collect specific data on any particular issue that they want to explore by using the basic research questions: what, why and how.

Experiences from the field have shown that this methodology is a feasible approach to bringing children and young people's views to the public debate in order to contribute to addressing the issues that they want to raise.<sup>1</sup> Young researchers have used this approach to identify violence used against children in multiple settings.

## What are the main components of the project?

The three main components are:



### SKILLS

#### Providing capacity building to young researchers.

Participants learn about research, writing skills, children's rights, advocacy techniques and other tools and knowledge needed for social change.

### SPACE

#### Ensuring enabling environments to conduct child-led research.

Space and opportunities are created to support activities that enable young researchers to share their views on issues relevant to them. This includes preparation of community members, decision-makers and relevant stakeholders in order to ensure that young researchers have a supportive environment.

### INFLUENCE

#### Disseminating young researchers' findings to influence a change.

Participants are equipped with tools to disseminate their findings, ideas and recommendations. This dissemination process uses an intergenerational approach to influence decision-making and impact policies, practice and attitudes.

## *What are the benefits of this approach?*

Engaging children and young people in research opens up new pathways to explore how research can go beyond knowledge creation to actually producing change in the lives of children and young people.<sup>2</sup>

This approach helps connect the young researchers' experience in their lives with key stakeholders, policy-makers and others who can use their findings and recommendations to make a focused and specific change. Young researchers' own perspectives are essential to understand their lives from their unique viewpoints, especially around Violence Against Children, which is one of the key concerns for children and young people.<sup>3</sup>

This approach provides young researchers with new ways to influence decision-making processes on Violence Against Children that goes beyond their own groups. This is possible because they collectively draw up their demands and proposals based on group consensus and representability.<sup>4</sup>

This approach also provides numerous personal benefits, such as enhanced self-esteem and confidence, literacy skills, new interests in recognising various opinions and the sense of giving something back.<sup>5</sup>



# *How does the project contribute to the World Vision campaign to End Violence Against Children?*

A growing body of evidence shows that child-led research provides promising avenues to engage children and young people in police and practice efforts by creating a change for a better life for them,<sup>6</sup> especially around violence issues.

Child-led research will contribute directly to the World Vision campaign to End Violence Against Children's first external impact objective that seeks to "ignite movements for, with and by children to catalyse global changes in attitudes, raise awareness and drive empowered and effective action to end violence against children."

Child-led research is an empowering approach to engage children and young people as active participants in campaigning, while recognising them as competent social actors who can make decisions in their lives and can be active players of their own protection.

Through the research process, young researchers have the space and opportunities to explore issues that are relevant to them and enable them to provide recommendations for action to World Vision and a broad range of stakeholders. Studies have proven that one of the reasons why children and young people engage in research is because they want to have some level of influence to shape practice and policy,<sup>7</sup> and violence against children is one of their critical priorities in seeking justice.

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3. Alderson P (2000) Children as researchers. In: Christensen P and James A (eds) Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices. London: Routledge Falmer, 241–257
4. Shier, H. and Hernández, M. (2014) How Children and Young People Influence Policy-Makers: Lessons from Nicaragua, Children & Society, 28, pp. 1–14.
5. Skelton, T. (2008) Research with children and young people: exploring the tensions between ethics, competence and participation, Children's Geographies, 6:1, 21–36
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## A promising practice from the field

In Lebanon and Jordan, a group of Syrian refugee children came together to conduct their own research on the refugee situation in their host countries. The overall goal of this project was to give them the opportunity to influence the crisis response by expressing their concerns and needs. They developed research tools, collected data and analysed the information collected according to four settings: home, school, community and nation. Twenty young researchers interviewed around 140 children as key informants. The main findings showed the high levels of violence that children face in schools and communities is mainly bullying but also harassment, and engagement in street begging and child labour. The research report was disseminated among UN officials, government representatives, civil society organisations and media.

## How does the project work?

The Child-led research project uses an age-sensitive methodology which includes eleven stages from the initial brainstorm session to collecting data to celebrating the end of project. The methodology includes training on child-friendly research skills and other competencies such as creative writing, negotiation, advocacy and lobbying. The success of the project also relies on a skilled adult facilitator who is knowledgeable and experienced in child participation, research methodologies and child-led advocacy work.



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