



# CHILDREN'S ADVISORY GROUPS

A Global Learning Brief by World Vision International

Presented by the WVI Global Education and WVI Child Protection & Participation Sector Teams

# Children's Advisory Groups and Positive Youth Development

For the past 10 years, World Vision has steadily increased and institutionalised the practice of children's meaningful participation in our own organisation's decision-making processes, at both local and national levels. This process – called our Operational Requirements for Child Participation in World Vision Decision-making – gives children from around the world unique opportunities to voice their perspectives about World Vision's strategic priorities, as well as programming and budgeting decisions that directly impact children in their communities.

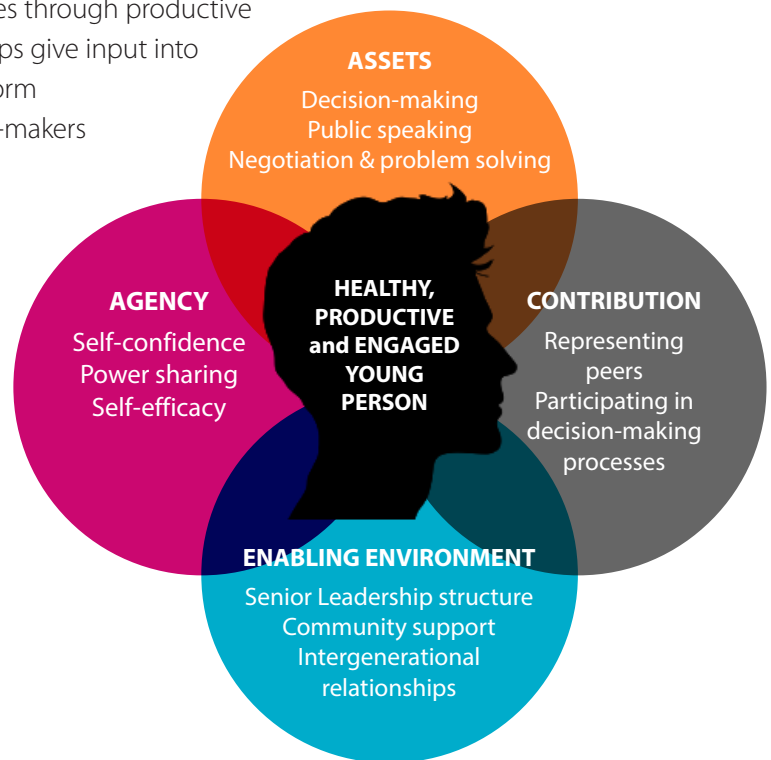
Throughout this process, a handful of offices have organically started to set up **Children's Advisory Groups** as a formal mechanism to engage boys and girls in intergenerational dialogue with the senior leaders of their respective World Vision Field Offices. The working definition of these groups is:

*A representative group of boys and girls who advise leaders at any level of World Vision programming, strategy decisions, and/or external platforms. They represent not only themselves, but they listen to their peers to represent other's needs and opinions. They work in collaboration with adults to ensure children's voices are heard and considered when WV and their external partners make decisions concerning children ages 0-18.*

This growing approach aligns with World Vision's **Positive Youth Development** approach for adolescents, which emphasises that:

- 1. Children do not develop in isolation, but rather within environments, structures, and systems.**  
The Children's Advisory Groups in World Vision offices are creating a meaningful, consistent environment where young people know they will be heard.
- 2. Children (especially adolescents) play a vital role in their own development.** The formation of these groups acknowledges the expertise and experience that children bring to decisions that affect them, signaling effective programming and strategy for children must be informed by children themselves.
- 3. Working from a strengths-based approach is powerful.** The advisory groups affirm that positive outcomes for children and adolescents comes through productive activities and healthy relationships. The groups give input into interventions that will benefit children and form intergenerational relationships with decision-makers at all levels.

Children's Councils practice the principles of Positive Youth Development, as shown in this graphic, by building the skills and agency of its members, offering opportunities for members to contribute to decisions and organisational leadership activities in meaningful ways, and providing an enabling and safe environment for learning, growth, and engagement.



# PROMISING PRACTICES: ALBANIA'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

**Year Established:** 2023

**# of boys and girls involved:** 15 (6 boys, 9 girls)

The role of the WV Albania Children and Youth Advisory Board is to represent other children and adolescents in various local and national platforms that make decisions regarding children in the country. For example, in the last year, the members of this Advisory Board have participated in:

- A Review of the Youth Law in Albania, in close collaboration with the Cabinet of the Ministry of State for Youth and Children
- A meeting with the Director of the National Agency of Youth in Albania resulting in a joint action plan to reach out to marginalised and rural adolescents with World Vision's signature IMPACT+ project model that engages children 12-18 years old
- WV Albania's Theory of Change Strategy and Planning sessions for the next fiscal year
- A consultation tour in seven municipalities in Albania with existing IMPACT+ clubs
- Three separate meetings with WV Albania Board and Senior Leadership Team members



The Advisory Board values the practice of representation, ensuring that members not only speak about their own concerns but rather listen to and represent the voices of their peers, especially those that come from marginalized and vulnerable groups. They also practice constructive debate, respectful exchange of opinions, and expressions of various viewpoints.

*(Egla, one of the members of Youth Advisory Board meeting the Minister of State for Children and Youth and the Director of National Youth Agency on 1st of June the Children Day.)*

**Lessons Learned:** The team supporting the Children and Youth Advisory Board are learning how to best support this group in a sustainable way that allows members to define their own roles, responsibilities, and scope of work. Some of these lessons include:

- How to align current programming within WV Albania with the activities of the Advisory Board
- The importance of identifying and providing capacity building to the members to keep them motivated, contributing, and learning
- The need to define and clarify with members the group's mandate, shifting roles within the group, and group structure

# PROMISING PRACTICES: CAMBODIA'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH COUNCIL

**Year Established:** 2024

**# of boys and girls involved:** 18 (9 boys, 9 girls)

In 2024, World Vision Cambodia established its first Children and Youth Council to ensure that young people across their programming areas have the opportunity and platform to influence decision-making processes about programming and strategy at every level. This is the primary platform where children can raise their voices, express their concerns, and share their feedback on World Vision programme implementation. 18 boy and girl representatives from across various areas of Cambodia are then tasked to join a meeting with management and leadership teams at the AP level and national level.



Rima, a representative of the Council (pictured) says, “At this point, it shows us that we have the right to raise our voice, to participate in other forums, and to share what we have faced with other people, no matter what they are in terms of gender identities, LGBTQI, or from another group. We have the rights to share our concerns with other people to let them think and work on issues that affect us.”

Another member named Narin says, “I have participated in the children and youth council of World Vision International Cambodia. Through this participation, I have numerous opportunities, such as being a representative for other children, and I can raise the voice and concern of other children with the leadership team

of WI-C. I can join the decision-making meeting at WV. In addition, I have had other chances to join meetings or trainings both in my country and outside of it.”

**Lessons Learned:** Staff from Cambodia have learned that setting up this group is essential for each field office to promote and ensure the meaningful participation of young people. However, there are practical lessons, such as:

- The need to set up regular meetings, either online or face-to-face, to guarantee sufficient support for the child members
- Empowering and mentoring council members are a must to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to contribute
- The need to ensure that there is an enabling environment for boys and girls to participate and that there is no barrier or fear for them to speak up



# CONCLUSION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

As of August 2024, 10 World Vision Field Offices have established a form of Children's Advisory Group for Senior Leadership Teams and Board Members to consult and engage with. For more information on World Vision's Child Participation in Decision-Making work, [please click here](#).

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