

REIMAGINING CHILD PARTICIPATION

A **NEW FRAMEWORK** TO
ADVANCE **INTEGRATED
ACTION** FOR MEANINGFUL
AND INCLUSIVE CHILD
EMPOWERMENT

2024



Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Foreword	3
A call to action: Reimagining child participation	5
Why child participation matters: Benefits to children, governments, communities, civil society & private sector	7
Reimagining child participation: An integrated approach	8
Child participation in East Asia: Breakthroughs & gaps	13
World Vision East Asia's approaches & The promise of Young Minds CAMP	17
Investing in child participation: A call to action	23

Inspire **Minds**, Nurture **Hearts**
Grow **Impact**

Acknowledgements

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization 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.

© World Vision International 2024

This report would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of the over 100,000 child leaders participating through our programs in East Asia. We acknowledge the significant contributions of all seven field offices from Cambodia, China, Mongolia, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.

This was spearheaded by the World Vision East Asia's Regional Advocacy Lead Ariel Odtojan, Child Participation and Mobilization Advisor Faith Richelle Sy, and Sponsorship Advisor Lilian Varquez. We are grateful for the expert guidance provided by the External Engagement Team through the leadership of Regional Director Lindsey Ruffolo and the support from EAS Regional Leader Terry Ferrari. We further extend our appreciation to all EAS Regional colleagues who provided valuable insights and feedback. We also would like to thank Jhanika Almazan-Biasotto for contributing stories of transformation and Rachel Anna Skeates Millar for reviewing and copy editing and revising the introductory and concluding sections of the report. Lastly, we appreciate our consultant, Justine Kristel A. Villegas, for helping develop the reimagined framework and conducting the external child participation landscape analysis.

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced in any form, except for brief excerpts in reviews, without prior permission of the publisher.

All photos © World Vision

Suggested citation: Reimagining Child Participation: A New Framework to Advance Integrated Action for Meaningful and Inclusive Child Empowerment, World Vision East Asia, September 2024.



Foreword

Progress often comes from the tender hands and youthful spirits of children. Their perspectives, untainted by the prejudices of adulthood, offer a fresh perspective on the many issues facing the world today. Child participation, therefore, isn't just a new idea—it's crucial for real change.

At a young age, I have been fortunate to witness and participate in platforms that value the opinions of children. As a member of World Vision's (WV) children's club and the international "Child Advisory Council" at Child Rights Connect, I have come to understand that our voices, though young, carry profound wisdom and urgency. I have travelled from vast plains of Mongolia to the echelons of the United Nations (UN), advocating for two things that are close to my heart: child rights and climate change.



Climate change isn't merely a scientific oddity to me; it's a tangible force profoundly impacting my homeland. When I stood before global leaders at the UN, my goal was to represent the collective anxieties and hopes of my peers in Mongolia and across the world. The climate crisis isn't just about melting glaciers or escalating temperatures. It's about our future, the legacy we wish to leave behind, and the voice we wish to amplify.

Yet, this is not just about climate change. It's about allowing children to freely express their thoughts and dreams. Our age shouldn't silence us. As I tread this path of advocacy, I urge policymakers, parents, teachers, and community leaders to not just 'hear' children but to 'listen' to them. Children's insights have the transformative power to change the world. Their participation is not a privilege; it's a right.

My advocacy journey, from leading Mongolia's Fridays for Future to international child rights platforms, is a testament to what children can achieve when they are empowered.

As you read through this report, may the stories and insights inspire you as much as they have inspired us. May we listen to young voices as their dreams hold the blueprint for a brighter tomorrow.



Nomundari Urantulga

Child Advocate and Climate Change Activist, Mongolia



Life often offers us lessons, some of which are hard to digest. I was born without civil registration, a fact that held consequences throughout my early life. As a child, the absence of a loving family became obvious. Growing up with a father trapped in drug misuse, I faced challenges that seemed impossible to overcome.

But that all changed when WV Thailand gave me a lifeline, transforming my life in ways I had never imagined. As a sponsored child, they didn't just help me with material needs; they gave me a place to grow and find myself. It's there that I discovered my passion for leadership and saw how my own tough experiences could help me stand up for kids in similar situations.

My desire to make a difference led me to organise an anti-drug camp. Aside from educating children about the dangers of drug misuse, the goal was to encourage them that even in adversity, they could rise, participate actively, and even assist adults in breaking free from the chains of abuse.

My advocacy didn't stop at the Thai border. Representing my country on the international stage, I spoke not just as a youth leader but as the voice of those denied their fundamental rights due to lack of citizenship. It's an unfortunate reality that students without Thai citizenship face systemic barriers. From ineligibility for student loans, which severely curtails their educational aspirations, to exclusion from civil services, their dreams remain stifled.

But dreams, when powerful, find their way. I stand as a testament to that. Throughout my experience, my message to leaders, policymakers, and fellow advocates remains unchanged: Every child, regardless of their background or status, deserves equal opportunities, love, and the power to carve their own path.

Throughout this report, every word reinforces our collective belief: change is possible, and we can make it happen together.

ลหoo ลาหoo ลาหoo

Lahoo

Child Rights Advocate, Thailand

A call to action: Reimagining child participation



Child participation is both a process and an outcome. Children who are truly empowered to exercise self-expression, agency and voice in the development process not only contribute a critical perspective that helps strengthen community outcomes, but they fulfill their fundamental child rights. They develop into more effective individuals who help create healthier societies for the future. Meaningful child participation brings tangible benefits for each segment of society including children themselves, governments, communities, civil society and the economic sector.

Achieving this type of empowerment requires advancing beyond simple participation metrics into more mature, intentional and comprehensive child participation programming. The kind that considers the root causes or barriers and works to create change across every level of the socio-political system. This means working at every level to foster, sustain and institutionalize the values that give space to children's voice and agency.

In recent decades since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, significant progress has been made among governments and development partners to acknowledge the importance of children's participation in development activities. As a global child-focused organization born in East Asia, World Vision has for many decades been among those at the forefront of work to recognize the voice of the child. Over this time common practices and approaches have evolved and been shared amongst development partners, many of which have focused on measuring, monitoring and encouraging active participation at the project and activity level. This work has helped spotlight child participation as an important and enduring development investment. Yet what has become clear is that simplistic models focusing on the child and engagement metrics alone are insufficient to create systemic levels of change.

This paper describes World Vision’s emerging conceptual framework for reimagining child participation. We outline our way of understanding and designing for meaningful child participation that has evolved through World Vision’s on-the-ground experience and learning alongside communities in East Asia. It reflects what we have found works to help identify and address many of the common barriers or challenges we have found in our efforts to foster child participation. This framework offers a way of conceptualizing and analyzing the context in which development work is implemented and can be used as a tool to help governments and their development partners unpack and plan for the kinds of collective action that are needed to achieve more sustainable impact.

The essential features of this approach are that it explores the complementary roles each actor plays at every level of the system and draws attention to the importance of collective and integrated action across governments, communities and development partners. It outlines three action areas in the pathway of change - starting with fostering child participation through increased capacity and intergenerational learning, and sustaining those with enhanced practices, relationship dynamics and systems, and then ultimately institutionalizing child participation through laws, policies, accountability and feedback mechanisms. The framework outlines goals to be targeted as well as mechanisms for achieving them within each of the three domains of change.

We apply the framework to the context of East Asia and demonstrate how this approach can be used as a tool for informing and enhancing effective investment into child participation for any government and civil society work. We use the framework to analyze the context and understand the dynamics to illuminate an accelerated change pathway for holistic child participation in East Asia. The analysis shows how much progress that has been made in East Asia across many places and numerous contributors. It also names examples of innovative practices that are ready to be scaled up more consistently across domains.

The mapping also draws attention to significant areas of under-investment in East Asia, especially with adults as key enablers for transforming relationships with children, and into the sustainability of efforts through the embedding of child participation practices across governments and within our institutions. The findings provide a call to action that recognizes the importance of each player in the system. They call for an integrated coherent response that helps to make child participation equitable for all children, in all their diversity.



Why child participation matters: Benefits to children, governments, communities, civil society & private sector

Benefits to children

- **Developing and improving critical skills for personal development.** Engaging in governance and decision-making processes can empower children to develop and improve their communication, critical thinking, advocacy, and leadership skills.^{1, 5, 6}
- **Cultivating self-confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging.** Engaging in community discussions and decision-making processes exposes children to diverse perspectives, increasing their empathy and enhancing their confidence and ability to interact, negotiate, and work with people from different backgrounds. Their involvement can also help children feel a sense of belonging and commitment to their communities.¹
- **Enhanced capacity to contribute to the fulfillment of other fundamental children's rights.**⁶ Child participation is the key to fulfilling other foundational children's rights (i.e. the principle of nondiscrimination [Article 2], the best interest of the child [Article 3], the right to information [Article 13], the right to guidance from adults [Article 5], and the right to be safe [Article 19]) as enshrined in the UNCRC. Child participation can instill in children a sense of agency and ownership, which could protect them from violence and other acts of abuse, neglect and discrimination.² Child participation can also enable children to hold adults accountable for the protection and fulfillment of their rights.

Benefits to governments

- **Creation and implementation of policies and programs that directly and effectively address real-life concerns.**^{2, 3} Engaging children in the co-creation, implementation, monitoring, and improvement of policies and service delivery mechanisms, especially at the community or local level, can enable governments to more effectively meet the specific needs of its constituents. This is because children offer unique insights on daily realities which could lead to more concrete solutions that could meet the needs of their families and communities.
- **Ensuring sustainability of policies and programs and continuity of positive impact.** If children are involved throughout the project or program cycle (i.e. from inception to implementation), there is a higher chance for them to be more invested in and committed to partner with adults⁴ in the improvement of initiatives even as they transition to adolescence or young adulthood. Furthermore, their participation in governance and program implementation early on in their lives equips them with background knowledge and wisdom to provide innovative insights that could help improve the sustainability and impact of policies and programs in the years to come.
- **Strengthened accountability of governance structures and mechanisms.** Children are stakeholders who can call leaders and policymakers to account by following up on how these adults acted on their concerns and recommendations. With an enabling environment, children's involvement in accountability mechanisms can lead to more inclusive and responsive governance structures and systems.²

Benefits to communities & civil society

- **Strengthening of intergenerational relationships.** Integrating child participation in decision-making processes in local communities could help overcome intergenerational tensions and build trusting and equitable relations that could bring about a more cohesive and peaceful society.
- **Improving collective mechanisms for addressing local concerns.** Child participation in collective decision-making processes at the local and community levels can lead to concrete and effective solutions to problems^{3, 5} and at the same time give rise to improved governance mechanisms as adults learn from children's ideas and perspectives.
- **Institutionalizing democratic processes for decision-making.** Child participation can lead to the enhancement of practices for democratic engagement⁵ and open up and sustain discourse for improving the inclusion and participation of other populations in decision-making. Such a sustained discourse is necessary to spark efforts for the institutionalization of more democratic governance processes.
- **Nurturing a generation of more engaged citizens.** Children's participation in governance and decision-making processes will bring about a present and future generation of more engaged and committed citizens, which can result in more cohesive and peaceful communities and societies⁶

Benefits to the private sector

- **Nurturing a responsible and engaged workforce.** By investing in child participation, businesses and corporations can better understand and enhance the capabilities of the upcoming generation of potential leaders and employees. Building trusting relationships with children can overall bring about a more responsive and innovative workforce.
- **Boosting reputation and maintaining credibility.** Investing in child participation as a form of corporate social responsibility enables businesses to inevitably commit to ethical standards and the well-being of present and future generations, which could then boost their image and reputation and build and maintain trust and credibility with their stakeholders.
- **Sustaining one's market relevance.** Investing in child participation means investing and understanding current and future market consumers, consequently enabling businesses to stay relevant and ahead of the curve.

1 Solin, Roganda Sadani Ukur and Ruwaida, Ida (2022) "Reflection on the Implementation of Children's Participation Rights (Based on Lundy's Participation Model)." *Journal of Strategic and Global Studies*: Vol. 5: No. 1, Article 1. Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/jsgs/vol5/iss1/1>

2 Joining Forces for All Children (2021). "Children's Right to be Heard: We're Talking, Are You Listening? (Policy Brief)." Available at: <https://joining-forces.org/publications/childrens-right-to-be-heard/>

3 The ASEAN Magazine (2022). Available at: <https://theaseanmagazine.asean.org/files/media/2022/08/The-ASEAN-Issue-22-Children-First-digital-version.pdf>

4 Faedi Duramy, B. and T. Gal. "Understanding and Implementing Child Participation: Lessons from the Global South." *Children and Youth Services Review* (2020). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chidyouth.2020.105645>

5 Elevate Children Funder's Group (2022). Weaving a Collective Tapestry: A Funders' Toolkit For Child and Youth Participation. Available at: <https://elevatechildren.org/publications-cyptoolkit>

6 Joining Forces for All Children (2024). "A Seat at the Table: Investing in children's participation as a cornerstone of children's rights (Policy Brief)." Available at: <https://joining-forces.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/EN-REPORT-A-Seat-at-the-Table.pdf>

Reimagining child participation: An integrated approach

Seminal works and succeeding typologies and matrices on child participation since the 1990s have sparked relevant discourse on meaningful child engagement. They have also significantly informed the design and implementation of various initiatives. These frameworks are generally focused on the varying degrees of children's engagement (i.e. Hart, 1992) or showing the factors or elements that make child participation feasible at the project or program levels (i.e. Lundy, 2007).

Missing in these frameworks, however, is an extensive discussion of the broader social and political landscape where child participation occurs and the complex linkages between key actors. Without comprehensively examining how different elements work together, investments in and designing of initiatives would be fragmented or conducted in silos, consequently undermining overall progress in advancing child participation at some or all levels or sites/settings.

We therefore build on these frameworks to reimagine an intricate conceptualization of child participation (see Figure 1 below). This framework shows child participation as a contextual process facilitated by collaborations between multiple key actors and sites.

Such a framework is crucial in analyzing and in investing in child participation in a holistic manner. Using this reimagined framework, we can look more deeply into the interconnectedness of key actors' contributions and the status of advancing child participation within particular settings. It will also clearly show the gaps and bottlenecks to child participation at the community, local, national, regional and global levels.

Anchored on the **principles of the UNCRC**, an integrated approach to advancing child participation envisions child participation as both a means (a process) and an end (an outcome).⁸

Child participation is a **means to or a process of**:

- Fulfilling other fundamental children's rights as stipulated in the UNCRC
- Achieving sustainable development over time

Child participation is also an **end or an outcome**, given that:

- Child participation is a right in itself
- Child participation could be an indicator of social inclusion and development

Overall, our proposed reimagined framework defines child participation as a complex, never-ending, situated process of strengthening collaborative actions between key actors and sites to promote:

- Children's self-expression
- Children's exercise of their agency
- Children's influence on development processes and outcomes

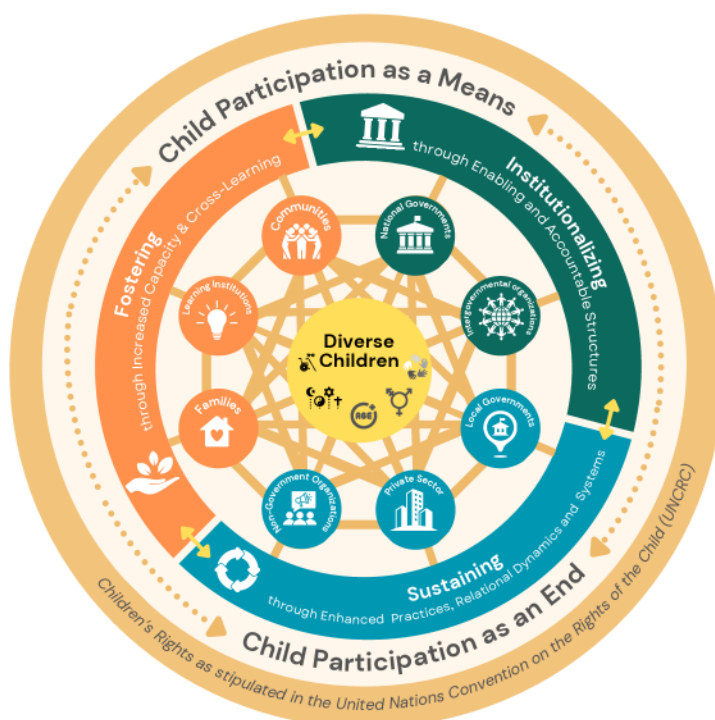


Figure 1. Reimagined framework for an integrated approach to advancing child participation

7 Nonformality.Org (2022). *Models of Participation & Empowerment*. Available at: <https://www.nonformality.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Participation-Models-20110703.pdf>

8 Article 12 and General Comment No. 12 of the UNCRC explicitly state that child participation is a dynamic process and imply that it is an outcome that could positively influence and improve children's lives.

See Article 12: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

See General Comment No. 12: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/crc/2009/en/70207>

Three action areas to holistically advance child participation

This integrated framework also sees the process of advancing child participation as having three interconnected components or action areas which result in various mechanisms. These mechanisms could be a combination of activities that promote consultative, collaborative or child-led participation⁹:

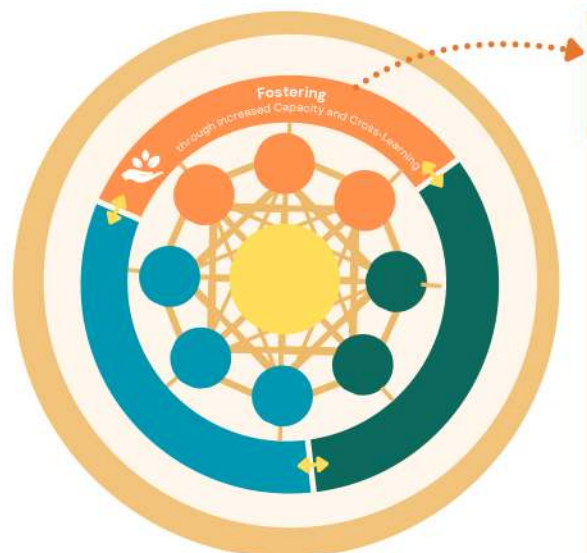


Figure 2. Fostering child participation



Fostering child participation through increased capacity and cross-learning

Goal: Strengthen children's abilities for self-expression and meaningful engagement

Mechanisms:

- Capacity building and learning programs for children and adults
- One-off or short-term intergenerational dialogues and advocacy campaigns that introduce children to initial opportunities for meaningful engagement
- Awareness-raising or peer education activities
- Development of child-friendly learning and teaching materials
- Short-term participatory research studies that seek children's perspectives on various issues

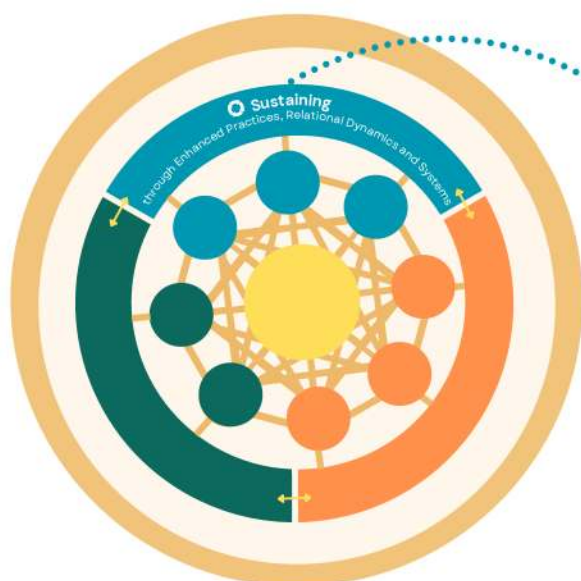


Figure 3. Sustaining child participation



Sustaining child participation through enhanced practices, relational dynamics and systems

Goal: Guarantee the implementation of quality long-term or recurring mechanisms that address concerns which directly affect children's lives and which transform attitudes, norms and practices

Mechanisms:

- Long-term or recurring projects, programs or advocacy campaigns that tackle specific issues or thematic areas and simultaneously enhance or transform intergenerational relations and organizational or programmatic practices
- Long-term or recurring forums for children's self-expression such as long-term participatory research or recurring opportunities for intergenerational dialogue
- Efforts or initiatives that secure long-term funding, human resource and technical support to facilitate child participation
- Empowering children's voices among their peers, families and communities and other immediate social spheres or relationships

⁹ Based on Lansdown's (2011) classification: consultative participation, in which adults seek children's perspectives to inform initiatives; collaborative participation, in which children partner up with adults to implement initiatives; and child-led participation, in which children identify issues of concern, design and lead activities or projects.

See: Lansdown, Gerison (2011). "Every Child's Right to be Heard. A Resource Guide on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No 12." Published by Save the Children UK on behalf of Save the Children and UNICEF. Available at: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/every-childs-right-be-heard-resource-guide-un-committee-rights-child-general-comment-no-12/>

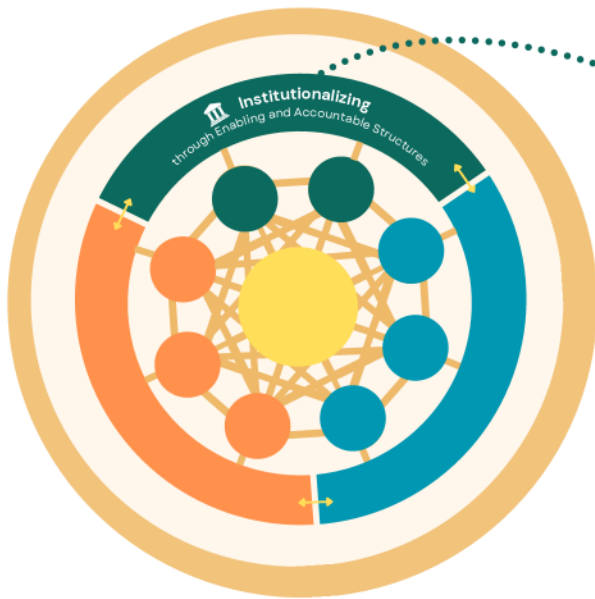


Figure 4. Institutionalizing child participation

 Institutionalizing child participation through mainstreaming and establishing laws, policies and accountability, feedback and evaluation mechanisms

Goal: Make child participation a permanent part of societal processes

Mechanisms:

- National and local government laws
- Children and youth councils
- Accountability or intergenerational two-way feedback mechanisms (which enable children not just to share their perspectives, but also to learn how adults acted upon their concerns or recommendations)
- Efforts or initiatives that mainstream children's rights
- Efforts or initiatives that harmonize and maximize complementary initiatives or mechanisms

The reimagined framework also shows different key actors or sites and the interconnected lines between them signify that consistent collaborative interactions between them is required to holistically uphold child participation (see note on key actors on page 12 for further explanation).

Key actors in the reimagined framework



Figure 5. Collaboration between key actors

- Families/Households
- Formal & Informal Learning Institutions
- Communities
- Non-government organizations
- Private sector
- Local governments
- National governments
- Intergovernmental organizations

Families/households, formal and informal learning institutions and communities primarily contribute to the fostering of child participation as they enable children to learn basic communication skills and as they provide initial avenues for children's self-expression.

These three also become the first sites where children initially learn how to access and process information, collaborate with and learn from others, and undertake their first leadership and decision-making roles.

These key actors therefore often lay the groundwork for child participation as they equip children with the foundational communication and learning skills for meaningful engagement. However, this does not mean that they do not contribute to the other action areas.

The intersecting lines suggest that as these three actors collaborate with other actors, they can contribute to sustaining and institutionalizing child participation as well, by ensuring that children and adults have the capacity to consistently and meaningfully communicate and engage effectively with others.

Non-government organizations, the private sector and local governments primarily contribute to sustaining child participation as they guarantee the implementation of long-term and recurring mechanisms that meaningfully engage children. These three also become the sites where children further enhance their communication skills and where they establish themselves as active leaders and decision-makers.

These key actors often provide the technical, financial and human resource support necessary to prolong and sustain child participation programs, projects and activities on the ground. The intersecting lines suggest that as these three actors collaborate with other actors, they can contribute to sustaining and institutionalizing child participation as well. For instance, programs they implement or support often include: (1) capacity building of children and adults, which contributes to fostering child participation, and/or (2) advocacy, which contributes to institutionalizing child participation.

National governments and intergovernmental organizations primarily contribute to institutionalizing child participation as they have the power to formulate and enforce legal policies and political mechanisms that would make child participation a permanent part of societies.

These two also become the sites where children express their views on broader national or global matters, and where children attempt to make long-lasting impact as they engage with and seek to influence the decisions of national and global actors. These key actors often provide the legal policies and national and global strategies for child participation to penetrate all areas of social and political lives. They also often provide financial, technical and human resource support to harmonize and maximize complementary long-term projects or programs on the ground. The intersecting lines suggest that as these two actors collaborate with other actors, they can contribute to fostering and sustaining child participation as well. For instance, by making child participation the convention in all areas of social and political life, fostering the capacity of present and future generations of children for self-expression and meaningful engagement and sustaining child participation programs and activities could both be more easily guaranteed in the long run.



Figure 6. Inclusion of diverse children through the collaborations between key actors

Inclusion of diverse children

The reimagined framework emphasizes the need to meaningfully engage children of different ages, race/ethnicity, genders, religious or cultural backgrounds and those with disabilities to ensure that a diversity of children's voices are taken into account in relevant activities and decision-making processes.

As key actors collaborate to foster, sustain and institutionalize child participation, they will be able to come up with more effective strategies and open up more opportunities for the inclusion of diverse children in relevant mechanisms or programs and projects on the ground.



A tool to holistically advance child participation

The level of consistency of collaborative interactions between these key actors/sites determine which action areas are adequately covered by mechanisms and which require more attention. For instance, if upon analysis, a mechanism is implemented by more than three key actors (signified by more overlapping or interconnected gold lines), then this means that there is a higher chance that a mechanism is effective in covering all action areas or in holistically advancing child participation.

The interconnectedness between the three action areas also indicate that there is often some overlap and blurred lines between these categories. For instance, there are instances when mechanisms not only increase the capacity of children but also facilitate recurring or long-term opportunities for self-expression, and there are also mechanisms that start out as channels for active engagement but eventually lead to institutionalized or permanent avenues for child participation.

Holistically advancing child participation means making the most of the strength of each three action area and boosting the complementarity of key actors' efforts and mechanisms at all levels. Focusing only on one action area is not enough; for instance, merely increasing children's capacity is pointless if there are no long-term or permanent mechanisms available for them to express themselves or influence decision-making processes in different settings.

This reimagined framework therefore offers a way of conceptualizing and analyzing the context in which child participation mechanisms is implemented and can be used as a tool to help key actors collectively map out and plan for complementary and more effective and sustainable initiatives.

Overall, an integrated approach is the key to holistically invest in child participation, as it could help identify complementary actions that need to be further strengthened, and point to gaps and barriers that undermine the holistic advancement of children's meaningful engagement in society.

Child participation in East Asia: Breakthroughs & gaps

We used our reimagined framework to map out the child participation mechanisms, projects/initiatives implemented in East Asia a year before COVID-19 hit, and during and after the height of the pandemic (2019-2024) (click on the map on Figure 8 on the next page to view details for each country).

Our mapping revealed the presence of collaborative actions between intergovernmental bodies, national governments and international and national non-government organizations (NGOs) in the region. These key actors lead or co-implement mechanisms that contribute to the fostering and sustenance of child participation within selected communities or cities/municipalities in East Asian countries. The reimagined framework also shows that the region still has a long way to go in terms of institutionalizing child participation at the national, local and community levels.



Figure 7. Using the reimagined framework to map out the collaborations between key actors for advancing child participation in the East Asian region

Fostering child participation in the region

At different levels in the East Asian region, the main mechanisms that contributed to the fostering of child participation within 2019 to 2024 are capacity building programs for children and adults and one-off or short-term opportunities for dialogues and campaigns. However, there is a need to increase awareness-raising or peer education activities and the development of child-friendly learning and teaching materials at the local and community levels, as well as opportunities for children to participate in research studies that highlight their perspectives on various issues.

Specifically, at the regional level, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) contributes to the fostering of child participation as it conducts various capacity building initiatives through the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) which mainly facilitates collaborative learning among adults (i.e. government officials, civil society organization representatives and other stakeholders). ACWC also supports the implementation of capacity-building programs within different member-states which engage children in the monitoring and assessment of policies at the regional, national and local levels. However, there is a need for ASEAN to explore implementing mechanisms that directly capacitate children and also facilitate intergenerational learning (between adults and children, and between youth or young adults and children).

Similarly, at the national and local levels, the majority of the mechanisms within 2019 to 2024 (led mainly by international and national NGOs and intergovernmental organizations in each country in the East Asian region) included capacity building of children, updating of school curricula, development of child-friendly materials, implementation of short-term participatory research and advocacy campaigns and facilitation of peer education.

Understandably, most of these mechanisms focused on addressing COVID-19 and other related health and education issues as these are the most pressing concerns since 2020. Some mechanisms also tackled violence against children, climate change and upholding children's ecological rights. There is a need therefore for capacity building mechanisms that tackle other thematic areas or emerging issues in light of the changes brought about by the pandemic.

There is also a need for more intergenerational learning opportunities and child-friendly materials that tackle other thematic areas or issues, as well as research projects that enable children to influence data collection and other research processes. There is also a gap in the region in terms of establishing digital and online learning platforms (such as community resource centers) and creating opportunities for intergenerational learning between young children and children who have already transitioned to youthhood or young adulthood. The latter is vital in ensuring the continuity of projects and of project impact and overall transformation of intergenerational relations within communities in the long run.

Sustaining child participation in the region

At different levels in the East Asian region, the main mechanisms that contributed to the sustaining of child participation within 2019 to 2024 are long-term or recurring forums for children's self-expression or intergenerational dialogue and long-term or recurring projects, programs or advocacy campaigns that tackle specific issues or thematic areas. However, there is a need for more efforts that secure long-term funding, human resource and technical support to facilitate child participation, as well as initiatives that transform intergenerational relations and empower children's voices among their peers, families, communities and other immediate social spheres.

Specifically, at the regional level, the ASEAN Children's Forum is the main mechanism that best sustains child participation, as it biannually brings together child representatives of the ASEAN member-states to express their perspectives about various issues and to advocate for their rights. The children's concerns are consolidated and presented to the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development and are also shared with other sectoral bodies.

National governments and international and national NGOs such as UNICEF country offices, Child Fund, Save the Children, World Vision, Terres des Hommes, and SOS Children's Villages Vietnam have also taken the lead in sustaining child participation at the national levels from 2019-2024 through various child participation mechanisms that often take the form of long-term capacity building or education programmes, participatory research projects, and advocacy campaigns. Understandably, most of these mechanisms also focused on addressing COVID-19 and other related health and education issues, while others tackled violence against children, climate change and upholding children's ecological rights.

However, there is a need for more long-term or recurring projects that tackle other thematic areas or emerging issues post-COVID. There is also a need to understand how previous or existing projects or mechanisms have contributed to the transformation of norms, practices and intergenerational relations, to inform the conceptualization and design of future projects.

It is also worthy to note that most of these mechanisms are initiated or led by NGOs or intergovernmental country offices and funded largely by intergovernmental organizations, foundations or private donors. They are therefore often implemented within a limited period of time which undermine their potential to create more impact and reach more children from diverse backgrounds. Most of these initiatives have strong partnerships with local governments and communities that guarantee successful implementation within their set project/program period. However, having stronger and more consistent tie-ups with more key actors, such as the national governments, learning, academic and research institutions and the private sector could enable these NGOs to sustain their initiatives for longer periods of time.

It could also be argued that child participation could be more systematically sustained at all levels if national governments could take more leadership in setting up mechanisms that would ensure consistent funding and human and technical resources to implement various meaningful child engagement initiatives, especially at the local and community levels.

Furthermore, national governments in the East Asian region have the power to harmonize existing initiatives within their own countries. They can also build stronger bridges between key actors and ensure complementarity between various projects that work within similar area programmes to maximize key actors' efforts. More importantly, national governments have the power to point and redirect NGOs and other potential key actors to gaps or thematic areas/issues that need urgent attention, especially at the local and community levels.

Institutionalizing child participation in the region

At different levels in the East Asian region, the main mechanisms that contributed to the institutionalization of child participation within 2019 to 2024 are international and national documents or policies and feedback mechanisms within non-government organizations. However, there is a need to make the presence and involvement of children and youth councils more permanent in decision-making processes at different levels. There is also a need to increase efforts which mainstream children's rights, and initiatives that systematically harmonize and maximize the complementarity of child participation mechanisms at the national, local and community levels.

Specifically, at the regional level, ASEAN plays a key role in institutionalizing child participation in the region, as it adopted the Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children in 2010 which guaranteed child participation in ASEAN's processes and policies and the roll-out of regional policies that promote and protect the rights of women and children. This declaration also led to the establishment of the ACWC, the commission which supports the work of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development and the ASEAN member-states in upholding women and children's rights (including children's right to participate). ACWC primarily supports children's active engagement in ASEAN dialogue and consultation processes concerning the promotion and protection of their rights. In 2016, ASEAN also renewed its commitment to child participation as it updated its strategy and planning mechanism, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025, and explicitly mentioned engaging children in the development and implementation of ASEAN plans and programmes.

International NGOs, including Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC Asia) have also been upholding child participation in the region and also seeks to institutionalize meaningful child engagement in different levels through its programs and campaigns that mainstream children's rights. CRC Asia in particular leverages on the diversity of its 17 member organizations coming from 13 countries to uphold children's rights as stipulated by the UNCRC, including children's right to participate in regional decision-making processes.

At the national level, the national governments within the East Asian region contribute to institutionalizing child participation by upholding specific child rights policies and child participation initiatives lodged under their child rights strategic planning frameworks or national social development programs. However, children's councils or networks are only apparent in local communities in Mongolia, Vietnam and Thailand. What is notable is the lack of children's councils or networks in other countries especially at varying governance levels (national or subnational and community levels). Establishing children's councils at different governance levels would enable children to more systematically hold themselves and adults accountable in upholding children's rights. Such mechanisms would also enable children to better navigate political engagements and more directly influence decision-making of policymakers and leaders, which would overall make child participation a permanent part of various societal and development processes.

At the organizational, local, and community levels, international and national non-government organizations such as UNICEF country offices, AIP Foundation, Save the Children, Child Fund International, and World Vision have taken the lead in institutionalizing child participation by setting up feedback or accountability mechanisms within their programs or projects, to ensure that children could influence outcomes within their organizations and the programs they are implementing within children's communities. However, there is a need for these feedback or accountability mechanisms to be replicated at other levels and be made available in multiple formats and languages that children will be able to easily access and understand.



Figure 8. Map of East Asia (click on each country for the list of child participation mechanisms/initiatives and legal frameworks)

It is also worth noting that there is a need to close the feedback loops within different mechanisms in the region. Promising accountability and feedback mechanisms at the organizational level do exist (i.e. World Vision Cambodia, China, Mongolia, and Thailand) and at the local and national levels (Children and Youth Councils supported by UNICEF Thailand, World Vision Mongolia, and Youth Engagement App of AIP Foundation in Vietnam). However, there is also a need to put in place mechanisms that allow children to systematically follow up on or learn about how adults have acted on their concerns or recommendations after a set period of time. This way, adults could be held more accountable to their commitments to promoting children’s rights.

Among the mechanisms implemented within 2019 to 2024 that we have mapped out for this report, there are also limited efforts that assess the impact of child participation at different levels, as well as initiatives that focus mainly on transforming community attitudes and norms that undermine child participation.

There is also a need for more efforts to further mainstream children’s rights, including initiatives that effectively contextualize the provisions of the UNCRC so children in different contexts could learn how to claim ownership of their rights and take part in upholding these rights and holding adults and other key actors accountable in this process.

Finally, there is a need to more systematically map out and harmonize initiatives/mechanisms to guarantee complementarity and ensure that all areas for advancing child participation are covered at different levels. Intergovernmental organizations and national governments specifically have a significant role to play in documenting, coordinating, monitoring and supporting child participation mechanisms to maximize resources and ensure the permanence of meaningful child engagement in different societal processes.

Conclusion

Overall, there are many mechanisms that have been implemented in East Asian countries in the past decade to advance child participation at different levels. However, the region still has a long way to go in terms of harmonizing mechanisms and maximizing collaborative efforts of its key actors.

Addressing gaps and inconsistencies in collaborative actions between the key actors in the region is the only way to better optimize the potential of various mechanisms in holistically and meaningfully engaging diverse children.

World Vision East Asia's approaches & The promise of Young Minds CAMP

Our reimagined framework is also helpful in reflecting on how our own approaches ensure sustained child participation and at the same time contribute to the other two action areas (fostering and institutionalizing) to holistically advance meaningful child engagement within our organization and the communities and countries where we serve. At present, World Vision East Asia strives to advance child participation in three key domains within its organization: (1) programming; (2) advocacy; and (3) organizational decision-making processes.

Using the reimagined framework will show that overall, World Vision East Asia's programming and advocacy initiatives primarily contribute to the fostering and sustaining of child participation at the local, national and regional levels, while our decision-making processes contribute to the institutionalization of child participation at the organizational and community levels. In the near future, we also aim to come up with more initiatives that will further contribute to the institutionalization of child participation in the region. One such initiative is our recently launched child participation platform, the Young Minds CAMP (Child-Led Actions, Mobilizations & Partnerships). We are optimistic that this platform will contribute to a more holistic advancement of child participation in the East Asian region in the coming years.

Fostering and sustaining child participation at WV



Our existing programmes foster and sustain child participation within the region by equipping children with the skills to become active citizens and to meaningfully collaborate with adults in their communities. For instance, we mainly support children and adolescent clubs as platforms for learning life skills and advocating for children's issues. Meanwhile, our advocacy initiatives includes child-led research and mobilization, storytelling for social change, and child-led advocacy at the local and community levels, which help children advocate for their rights and the rights of others in their own terms and at their own pace. At the regional level, we support child representatives' preparations to speak at high-level forums and to influence the decisions of national and intergovernmental policymakers and leaders. These initiatives are implemented on a long-term or recurring basis to ensure that children's efforts could have a long-lasting impact on their communities and countries.

Our interactions with children in various activities under our programming and advocacy initiatives also effectively address real-life issues on various thematic areas and inevitably transform our prevailing knowledge, attitudes and beliefs and those of the adults and children in the communities and localities we work with. We also proactively adjust our systems and practices based on the feedback and recommendations we get from the children and adults who participate in our initiatives.

At the heart of our operations lies the Child Sponsorship programme, which by establishing children's long-term access to essentials like clean water, nutrition, and education, overall empowers children and provides the conditions for them to meaningfully engage within their communities.

Institutionalizing child participation at WV



World Vision has mechanisms in place that contribute to the institutionalization of child participation at the organizational and community levels. Our country offices have feedback mechanisms which enable children to influence World Vision's overall programs and strategies. In 2022, for instance, we released an inaugural [Global Report of Child Participation in World Vision Decision-Making](#), celebrating how boys and girls across WV Field Offices (FOs) have been engaged in our local and national decision-making processes that affect their lives, and ultimately influencing our programmes, strategies, and the direction of World Vision for the better. Furthermore, our Child Sponsorship programme, also upholds mechanisms that enable children to provide feedback and to influence how funds are allocated and affect their lives.

Stories of transformation

Holistic child participation is an integral part of World Vision East Asia, and this is demonstrated by the featured stories of transformation below about diverse children participating in various initiatives of its country offices:



Vietnam | “After joining the children’s club, we’ve seen transformative changes. We’re **equipped with life-skills, understand the importance of mutual respect between genders, and are empowered to report issues** like domestic violence. It’s taught me compassion,” shares 15-year-old Khánh.

In Vietnam, 32,003 children engage monthly in 1,327 clubs, learning life skills and advocating for children’s issues. 10,027 children spearhead advocacy action, including reporting protection incidents. **WV has initiated 99 child-led advocacies, allowing children to dialogue with leaders and propose policies to curb child violence.**



Thailand | At 17, Boontharika, a child leader from Maesot Province, **educates migrant children about official documentation and governmental services.** Many of these children, seeking jobs in Thailand, face hardships including a lack of education and shelter. Drawing from **her WV training, Boontharika assists with Thai language skills and promotes migrant children’s rights.** At the **2021 Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference, she championed accessible birth registration as a crucial child protection measure.**



Laos | “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 of 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.**”

(An excerpt from WVI 2022 Global Report on Child Participation in Decision- Making Celebrating Children’s Involvement in World Vision Decision-Making Processes)



Myanmar | In the face of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, 17-year-old Naw May Pan Khaing emerged as a champion for child rights. Engaging in consultative participation, she actively shared her views and insights, contributing to the design of positive discipline programs. Her advocacy efforts led to transformative changes within families, shifting attitudes from violence to compassion. Through WV’s Hseni Programme, 167 young leaders, including May, were actively consulted and involved in shaping the program. In 2021 alone, these consultations benefited 850 parents, including May’s own mother. **WV’s efforts resulted in 1,667 educated children, highlighting the influence of young advocates like May in building strong, compassionate communities.**





Cambodia | At 18, Seavmey, former WV youth club leader joined IMPACT+ at 13, drawn by its personal growth and volunteer opportunities. The IMPACT+ Club model is an integrated life skills approach designed to help adolescents transition into adulthood. Through the program, Seavmey honed her soft skills, advocacy, and leadership abilities, enabling her to lead sessions and collaborate effectively with local authorities. Initially met with skepticism, her volunteer work eventually gained recognition from the community. In 2022, Seavmey graduated, showcasing the transformative impact of IMPACT+ in empowering young leaders like her to collaborate effectively with local authorities and drive positive change in their communities.



Mongolia | 16-year-old Bekhbat, vice president of the Mongolian Children’s Council, began his association with WV Mongolia in middle school and has evolved into a prominent child leader. For a decade, WV Mongolia has championed the Citizen’s Voice in Action approach, empowering children to influence decision-making and legal reforms. Bekhbat also participated in the “Green Generation” campaign by WV, collaborating with government and INGOs, focused on addressing Mongolia’s air quality issues at the UNESCAP forum in Ulaanbaatar in 2023.



Vietnam | 15-year-old Tu joined World Vision Vietnam’s project to tackle online child exploitation from 2019-2021. After intensive training, he led his school’s child club, educating peers and parents on online safety. In 2021, he represented Vietnam at the ASEAN Conference on Cyberbullying, emphasizing the need for open dialogue between children and authorities about online experiences.



Mongolia | WV Mongolia’s “Young Researchers Club” enables teens in 19 schools to study issues impacting children’s well-being. Engaging 274 participants in discussions covering crucial topics such as e-cigarettes, bullying, and educational gaps, their valuable insights have sparked urgent calls for policy changes. A participant said, “Child-led research goes beyond numbers; it’s about turning the lens back on society to help reshape our futures.”



China | At nine, Xiaomei, with Down Syndrome, had communication and schooling challenges. With WV’s two-year support, her mother gained knowledge about Xiaomei’s needs, aiding her independence and schooling. Xiaomei’s progress, like improved vocabulary and self-sufficiency, and her time at a WV summer camp, boosted her confidence. Now, her family and community continuously support her growth and potential.



Holistic advancement of child participation: The promise of Young Minds CAMP

In recognition of the sparse occasions for children to meaningfully engage in decision-making processes at the national and international levels, as well as the untapped potential of diverse child leaders and opportunities for learning exchanges and collaborations within the region, World Vision East Asia has conceptualized, designed and launched its main child participation platform, the Young Minds CAMP (Child-Led Actions, Mobilizations and Partnerships) in 2024. Young Minds CAMP (YMC) contributes to the fostering and sustaining of child participation and could potentially contribute to its institutionalization within countries in the region. This is because YMC systematically puts together strategies that nurture child leaders and transform intergenerational relations and practices at the community, local, national and regional levels in the long-term.

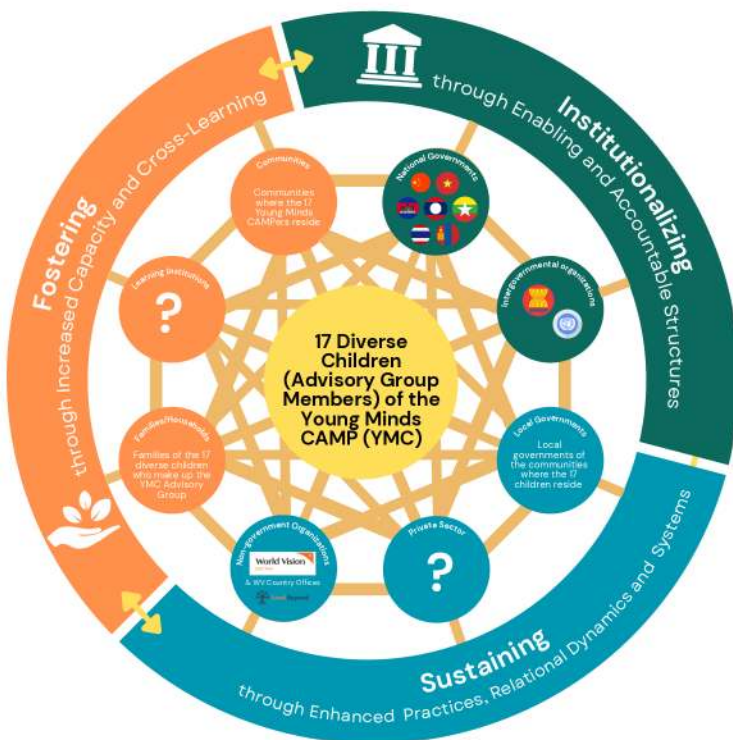


Figure 9. Using the reimagined framework to map out the collaborations between key actors currently facilitated by the recently launched Young Minds CAMP

YMC as a regional child participation platform will serve as a dynamic leadership academy, with face to face and online sessions that would last for six (6) months per cycle. YMC has three main components:

Leadership & Advocacy:
Equipping Young Minds CAMPers with leadership, communication and advocacy skills

The first component of YMC contributes to the fostering of child participation, as it builds the capacity of children for self-expression and meaningful engagement with others. At present, this is best demonstrated by the three-day face-to-face YMC workshop held in Bangkok from June 5 to 7, 2024, which enabled 17 diverse children (who are members of the YMC Advisory Council) to gain leadership, child-led research and communication and advocacy knowledge and skills.



“This CAMP is a wonderful place, and I met thoughtful people. I achieved a lot of valuable things. I will create a small children’s club in my home country so I can expand from what I have learned from here.”

-Duc, 12, Vietnam (during the dialogue with WV East Asia regional leader Terry Ferrari & External Engagement Director Lindsey Ruffolo)



I have learned many things, especially on leadership and child-led research. I will bring what I learned from here in my community”

-Aum, 17, Thailand (during the child-led research session of the YMC)



Social Innovation and Design:

Engaging Young Minds CAMPers in discovering issues, through listening to their peers (through child-led research), and then co-creating solutions and presenting them to leaders and external partners for consideration (i.e through advisory councils, start-up projects, mobilizations & intergenerational dialogue)



The **second component of YMC, “Social Innovation and Design”, contributes to sustaining child participation**, as it could facilitate recurring opportunities for children to influence decision-making processes and outcomes. During the third day of the YMC face-to-face workshop, for instance, Young Minds CAMPers applied their newly gained communication and advocacy skills by boldly presenting their climate change and food security concerns and recommendations to international development partners and NGO representatives during the ENOUGH Luncheon Dialogue.

Furthermore, with the support of World Vision East Asia, the Young Minds CAMPers have also designed and collected data for their research study which aims to understand the impacts of climate change and disasters on the lives of children residing in their communities. The outcomes of their study will be presented in another regional platform, the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction & Management (APMCDRRM), which will be held in the Philippines from 14 to 18 October 2024.

This **second component also contributes to the institutionalization of child participation in the region**, since YMC could potentially serve as an established regional platform for children from diverse backgrounds to voice out their concerns and also hold adults (within World Vision and their communities or localities, and potentially their national governments) accountable to them. YMC could also spark the creation of children’s councils which would enable children to more consistently become part of decision-making processes at various governance levels.

YMC could also strengthen children’s collaborations with other key actors at the local, community and national levels. Since the platform sets out to support children’s startup projects on diverse thematic areas and issues, these potential projects will also provide opportunities to partner with adults and consequently overcome intergenerational tensions and norms that negate child participation, which could then lead to the cultivation of more supportive and enabling communities for child participation.

“Young people can be a part of the solution to these issues. Involve us in the process of creating solutions... In our province, there is a school meal program which provides children with nutritious food... “Can UN agencies and governments and other partners work more to expand this program and to allocate funding for the expansion of this school meal program in my country?”

-Narin, 17, speaking on behalf of children in Cambodia (during the ENOUGH Campaign Luncheon Dialogue held on the 7th of June 2024 at Bangkok, Thailand)



Mentorship:

Partnering Young Minds CAMPers with World Vision staff who will support them throughout their YMC journey. The current Young Minds CAMPers will also co-create the modules and cascade training to the next cohorts of children who will participate in the CAMP in the coming years.

The **third component of YMC, “Mentorship” also contributes to fostering child participation**. This component will keep the cycle of intergenerational learning going. Furthermore, by extending the

duration of capacity-building through project cycles that last for 6 months and facilitating co-creation of modules and guaranteeing support, YMC increases children's ownership of the learning process and the platform. This could potentially lead to increasing children's commitment to child participation initiatives even as they transition to youthhood or young adulthood.

Overall, YMC as a mechanism has a promising potential to holistically advance child participation and bring about outcomes that could significantly promote the fulfillment of children's rights and the achievement of sustainable development in East Asia. This is also because as an emerging regional platform, YMC is in a strategic position to further strengthen collaborations with other key actors. For instance, YMC is yet to explore and initiate collaborations with key actors from the private sector and other learning and research institutions, and to further strengthen ties with national and local governments. Such collaborations are essential to optimize the potential of YMC as a child participation platform, and more importantly, for it to contribute to comprehensive solutions to interconnected issues that the East Asian region is facing at present.





Investing in child participation: A call to integrated action

Applying the reimagined child participation framework in East Asia, this paper has created a map of the institutional relationships and change pathways, identifying priority areas for joint action across development partners. The mapping shows just how much progress has been made across the region, spotlighting the number of good practices underway ready to be scaled up and replicated more consistently across programs and domains.

The mapping also reveals the significant gaps remaining within the collective action on child participation in East Asia. These need to be addressed if we are to jointly propel progress and achieve more meaningful gains towards actualizing the universal rights of the child. Most notably, there is need for more targeted action and support across the second and third domains of change of the reimagined framework – sustaining and institutionalizing.

This means development partners need to do more to ensure child engagement action works not only directly with children but also with adults to help adults gain new skills to support children's empowerment and to transform intergenerational relationships. Development partners must also not overlook investing in evaluating progress at an outcome level and sharing findings with others to support a deeper understanding of what actions are working for whom and the sustainability of the impacts programs are having on the transformation of norms, practices and intergenerational relations.

The analysis shows much more investment and focus are needed on supporting governments to action and institutionalize child participation into their decision-making practices, including ultimately into laws, resourcing and policies. Perhaps most importantly, across each of these actions, the mapping shows us that more needs to be done to enhance the equity of participation by removing barriers and giving a leg-up to the children who are most often overlooked and excluded. This is especially true for children of diverse identities who are less visible because they may be working, experiencing forced migration, or perhaps because they have a disability or are experiencing other forms of social exclusion.

In this way, the reimagined child participation framework demonstrates just how critical targeted collective and integrated action remains at each level of the system to tackle the root causes and sustain long-term change for present and future generations of children. The following pages provide a call to action for holistically advancing child participation across East Asia, as well as broader recommendations applicable in different contexts that compel key actors to step further into their essential role in advancing children's meaningful engagement at different levels.

Call to action for holistically advancing child participation across East Asia

Increasing time, financial, technical and human resource investments are necessary to address gaps, strengthen collaborative actions between key actors, and implement more effective mechanisms and initiatives that would holistically advance child participation within the region. Specific recommendations for addressing gaps in East Asia are as follows:



Fostering child participation through increased capacity and intergenerational learning

Goal: Strengthen children's abilities for self-expression and meaningful engagement

- There is a need for more collaborative efforts to increase capacity building opportunities (such as education and peer learning programs and research projects) and develop child-friendly, gender and culturally-sensitive and multilingual international, regional, and local documents and other relevant learning and teaching materials.
- There is also a need to establish accessible digital or in-person learning platforms (such as community resource centers) to ensure that children have the space and opportunity to process, communicate and learn information on their own terms and at their own pace.
- There is a need to further enhance the capacity of adults to facilitate child participation, especially professionals working directly with children.
- There is also a need to explore capacitating youth and young adults to serve as mentors to younger children and to keep the cycle of intergenerational mentorship going. This could ensure continuity of impact but requires consistent collaborations between learning institutions, NGOs, local and national governments and communities.



Sustaining child participation through enhanced practices, relational dynamics & systems

Goal: Guarantee the implementation of quality long-term or recurring mechanisms that address concerns which directly affect children's lives and which transform attitudes, norms and practices

- National and local governments should secure budgetary allocations and sustain public financing for child participation. There is also a need for national and local governments, and NGOs to include in their planning specific mechanisms to systematically meet the logistical needs of diverse children (i.e. travel, food, visa, adult chaperones), to sustain their involvement in different child participation initiatives (i.e. capacity building, intergenerational forum, etc.).
- There is a need to strengthen data collection and research to inform present and future initiatives within the region. The impact of child participation at the organizational, community, local, national and regional levels, for instance, need to be better understood, to address other gaps or strengthen already existing complementary strategies or good practices.
- It is imperative for national and local governments and NGOs to implement more initiatives that focus on transforming attitudes and norms at the community level, including challenging the beliefs that adults have about children's abilities or dispositions (i.e. children as mere passive recipients of services). These initiatives could be in the form of sensitization workshops or could be in the form of engaging parents/guardians, community leaders and members at the inception phase and/or throughout the implementation of projects or initiatives. This way, parents/guardians or community members could have a deeper understanding of the importance of child participation and their role in facilitating children's meaningful engagement in the long run.
- National and local governments and NGOs need to ensure the inclusiveness of their long-term or recurring initiatives. Their conceptualization, design, financing and implementation strategies need to include broad considerations for the effective inclusion of children with disabilities and those coming from different socioeconomic, ethnic, gender, religious, and cultural backgrounds.









Institutionalizing child participation through enabling and accountable structures

Goal: Make child participation a permanent part of societal processes

- There is a need to establish children or youth councils and strengthen support for these networks. National leaders also need to critically review their policies and cross-check with regional and international guidelines to ensure that these councils or networks sufficiently provide children with opportunities for self-expression and influencing decision-making processes at different levels.
- The region needs to put in place mechanisms that will systematically close the feedback loop with children, especially at the national level. National governments should have consistent mechanisms not just for children to voice out their concerns, but also to let them know how their concerns and recommendations have impacted specific outcomes. Such a mechanism would hold regional and national leaders and authorities accountable to children and will also further encourage children to consistently make an effort to engage in national and regional matters.
- There is a need to mainstream and harmonize child participation initiatives and mechanisms among key actors and sites, especially at the national, local and community levels. Children (and adults supporting them) need information and opportunities to network with key actors and engage in complementary mechanisms that tackle their chosen thematic areas.

Broader recommendations to holistically advance child participation in different contexts

	 Fostering child participation through increased capacity & intergenerational learning	 Sustaining child participation through enhanced practices, relational dynamics & systems	 Institutionalizing child participation through enabling & accountable structures
 FAMILIES/ HOUSEHOLDS	<p>Support and encourage children in learning basic communication and decision-making skills</p>	<p>Support and encourage children in engaging in initiatives in their schools or within their community</p> <p>Support and empower children to express their opinions and concerns within the family/household without fear of punishment or judgment</p>	<p>Support and encourage children in engaging in initiatives within their localities or at the national/regional/global levels</p>
 FORMAL & INFORMAL LEARNING INSTITUTIONS	<p>Enhance children's communication, leadership, and decision-making skills through different learning projects or programs</p> <p>Develop and disseminate child-friendly materials and learning & teaching tools and techniques</p> <p>Establish opportunities for intergenerational learning or mentorship between older children and younger ones, youth and children or young adults and children and youth</p> <p>Keep in mind diversity considerations i.e. language, format, disabilities, child-friendliness, gender, political and religious sensitivities in materials or teaching methods</p> <p>Engage in collaborative projects with schools, child-focused organizations, informal learning institutions and academic and research organizations to build the capacity of children to lead and partake in research and advocacy initiative</p> <p>Strengthen children's clubs/organizations and networks and facilitate events and activities that promote learning exchange and mentorship relations between children and adolescents in schools and young adults in universities</p> <p>Train teachers and school administrators so they could be better equipped to facilitate child participation initiatives.</p>	<p>Collaborate with other learning institutions or key actors to co-design and implement capacity-building programs that are more long-term and easily accessible to diverse children (efforts include seeking and securing long-term funding, technical and human resource support)</p> <p>Collaborate with other learning institutions or key actors to co-design and implement long-term initiatives that research on, develop and disseminate child-friendly materials, learning platforms and techniques, which could help transform attitudes, norms and practices (efforts include seeking and securing funding, technical and human resource support)</p> <p>Collaborate with communities, organizations and government agencies to come up with more innovative strategies and practices for designing projects and facilitating child participation at different levels</p> <p>Collaborate with research organizations to design and implement projects that aim to reassess and transform the sociocultural, economic and political landscape for child participation</p>	<p>Institutionalize a mechanism for children to become part of the decision-making processes within learning institutions (i.e. establishing children's council or strengthening existing children's organizations or councils)</p> <p>Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to voice out their concerns or provide feedback on existing learning programs or projects or to share ideas about potential learning or teaching initiatives</p> <p>Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to learn about how their concerns, feedback or recommendations have been acted upon by adults or educators in particular learning institutions</p> <p>Collaborate with research organizations to implement projects that assess the current impact of children's participation in different sectors, identify good practices or gaps, and conceptualize effective strategies. Findings from these projects can inform and improve educational, government, community and organizational initiatives.</p> <p>Integrate modules on children's rights, research and leadership and advocacy skills in formal curriculum, extra-curricular activities and non-formal education initiatives and programs to mainstream the child participation agenda.</p> <p>Establish mechanisms to coordinate and monitor child participation interventions across schools and universities.</p>
 COMMUNITIES	<p>Support and provide children with opportunities to sharpen their communication, leadership, and decision-making skills through different community initiatives or activities (i.e. providing them capacity building or experiential learning opportunities)</p> <p>Allocate funds for capacity building of children in communities</p> <p>Keep in mind diversity considerations i.e. language, format, child-friendliness, disabilities, gender, political and religious sensitivities in materials or teaching methods</p>	<p>Support and empower children to express their opinions and concerns and influence decision-making within their communities and within their peer groups or organizations without fear of punishment or judgment</p> <p>Collaborate with other key actors to successfully engage diverse children in more long-term or recurring meaningful child participation programs or initiatives</p> <p>Collaborate with other key actors to co-design and implement capacity-building programs that are more long-term and easily accessible to diverse children (efforts include seeking and securing long-term funding, technical and human resource support)</p> <p>Invest in and implement awareness-raising initiatives among families and community members to overcome negative beliefs and unequal power relations that undermine child participation</p> <p>Collaborate with national governments, NGOs and intergovernmental agencies to finance, co-design and co-implement long-term child participation projects that address urgent concerns in the community/locality</p>	<p>Institutionalize a mechanism for children to become part of the community's decision-making processes (i.e. through a community children's council)</p> <p>Ensure that there is child representation in community discussions and there are mechanisms for making participation spaces and processes more child-friendly</p> <p>Establish children's resource centers in the community where children could meet, do recreational activities, conduct information-sharing or implement their initiatives</p> <p>Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to voice out their concerns, provide feedback on existing community programs or projects or share ideas about potential initiatives</p> <p>Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to learn about how their concerns, feedback or recommendations have been acted upon by adults or leaders in the community</p>

Broader recommendations to holistically advance child participation in different contexts



Fostering child participation through increased capacity & intergenerational learning



Sustaining child participation through enhanced practices, relational dynamics & systems



Institutionalizing child participation through enabling & accountable structures



Implement capacity-building projects or programs that enhance children's capacity for self-expression, leadership, and decision-making skills and adult's capacity to facilitate children's meaningful engagement

Establish opportunities for intergenerational learning or mentorship between older children and younger ones, youth and children or young adults and children and youth

Rethink approaches for communicating with children, including re-assessing the "child-friendliness", gender sensitivity and conduciveness to diversity of learning and engagement tools and adjust them accordingly

Establish child-friendly, easy-to-navigate digital or physical repositories of information that children can access at any given time. This can support their design and implementation of self-initiated projects and inform their dialogue with peers and adults in their communities

Consider establishing multi-language and multi-platform participatory processes to enable children who come from minority or indigenous groups, those who cannot speak English and those who experience communication or mobility issues to engage with decision-makers and peers and to influence decision-making in their own terms.

Collaborate with other key actors to co-design, finance and implement diverse child participation programs or initiatives that are more long-term, easily accessible to diverse children and which positively transform attitudes, norms and practices of the actors within the organization and co-implementing institutions.

Keep in mind diversity considerations i.e. language, format, disabilities, child-friendliness, gender, political and religious sensitivities during implementation of initiatives

Increase efforts to reach and engage diverse groups of children, including those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, minority groups such as indigenous groups or those who identify as LGBTQIA+, those with less experience in projects, those who are out-of-school, those with limited digital access, knowledge and skills and those with disabilities. Their inclusion can help them become more embedded in community and children's networks

Allocate the necessary time, resources and preparation for capacity strengthening and participatory initiatives, to ensure that children's engagement could be more sustained and not just be limited to one-off activities

Collaborate with local communities and schools to ensure that processes are sensitively adapted to the children's socioeconomic conditions, relationships, and local cultures

Create opportunities for more constant intergenerational dialogue and collaborations between children and young people and adults in the communities to overcome intergenerational tensions, build trust, and garner buy-in, which are vital for sustaining efforts and increasing positive impact

Establish long-term collaborations with other organizations, movements, and children's platforms to strengthen the impact of child participation initiatives

Engage children at the design phase of the project to build long-term trusting relationships and ensure their meaningful engagement throughout other stages of project implementation. It is also more likely for children to be more motivated to commit to projects in the long run if they have been involved in and have a deeper understanding of these initiatives from the very beginning

Institutionalize a mechanism for children to become part of the organization's decision-making processes (i.e. through a children's advisory group or council)

Support the establishment or sustainment of children's resource centers in the community where children could meet, do recreational activities, conduct information-sharing or implement their initiatives

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to voice out their concerns, provide feedback on existing programs or projects or share ideas about potential initiatives

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to learn about how their concerns, feedback or recommendations have been acted upon by adults or leaders of the organization

Allot time and energy to report back to children on how their feedback influenced organizational programs or strategies

Advocate for and support the establishment of children's councils at the community, local and national levels



Implement corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects or programs that provide children with opportunities to enhance their capacity for self-expression, leadership, and decision-making skills adult's capacity to facilitate children's meaningful engagement

Collaborate with other key actors to finance, co-design and implement diverse child participation programs or initiatives that are more long-term, easily accessible to diverse children and which positively transform attitudes, norms and practices of the actors within the company and co-implementing institutions/communities

Keep in mind diversity considerations i.e. language, format, disabilities, child-friendliness, gender, political and religious sensitivities during implementation of initiatives

Support the establishment or sustainment of children's resource centers in the community where children could meet, do recreational activities, conduct information-sharing or implement their initiatives

Enable children's representation in business or trade councils so they could establish trusting relations with business leaders.

Broader recommendations to holistically advance child participation in different contexts



Fostering child participation through increased capacity & intergenerational learning



Sustaining child participation through enhanced practices, relational dynamics & systems



Institutionalizing child participation through enabling & accountable structures



Support leadership programs of schools/universities and provide opportunities for children and young people to interact with and learn from each other through capacity building and networking events.

Invest in mentoring children and building their capacities for entrepreneurship, leadership and innovative thinking.

Increase investments in child participation initiatives implemented by government and non-government agencies and strengthen collaborative ties with child-focused organizations and children's organizations and networks

Invest in multi-language and multi-format projects that increase awareness on the importance of child participation to contribute to the overcoming of intergenerational tensions that undermine children's meaningful inclusion in decision-making processes.

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to voice out their concerns, provide feedback on existing company initiatives or share ideas about potential collaborations

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to learn about how their concerns, feedback or recommendations have been acted upon by adults or leaders of the companies



Implement capacity-building projects or programs that enhance children's capacity for self-expression, leadership, and decision-making skills and adult's capacity to facilitate children's meaningful engagement

Collaborate with other key actors to finance, co-design and implement diverse child participation programs or initiatives that are more long-term, easily accessible to diverse children and which positively transform attitudes, norms and practices of the actors within the local government and co-implementing institutions or communities

Collaborate with communities, learning institutions and families/households to ensure the implementation of national child rights frameworks at the community or local levels

Collaborate with the private sector to supplement local financing and implementation of diverse child participation initiatives

Keep in mind diversity considerations i.e. language, format, disabilities, child-friendliness, gender, political and religious sensitivities during implementation of initiatives

Institutionalize a mechanism for children to become part of the city or municipal decision-making processes (i.e. through a local children's council)

Ensure the mainstreaming, operationalization and implementation of national child rights frameworks at the local level through a local strategy plan and engaging different city or municipality departments and actors

Support the establishment or sustainment of children's resource centers across the city/municipality where children could meet, do recreational activities, conduct information-sharing or implement their initiatives

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for all children to voice out their concerns, provide feedback on existing local government initiatives or share ideas about potential programs or projects

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to learn about how their concerns, feedback or recommendations have been acted upon by adults or local government leaders



Implement capacity-building projects or programs that enhance children's capacity for self-expression, leadership, and decision-making skills and adult's capacity to facilitate children's meaningful engagement

Invest in more capacity building initiatives to enhance children's abilities to process and communicate information, make or influence decisions, mobilize resources and people, and engage in or lead projects

Invest in more awareness-raising and capacity building initiatives for adults (parents, teachers, NGO staff, policymakers), and equip them with skills to work with children and to build long-lasting trusting relationships and partnerships with them

Increase investments in age-appropriate and gender-sensitive capacity building tools and materials to facilitate inclusive understanding, engagement and participation of diverse groups of children

Collaborate with other key actors to finance, co-design and implement diverse child participation programs or initiatives that are more long-term, easily accessible to diverse children and which positively transform attitudes, norms and practices of the actors within the national government and co-implementing institutions and localities

Collaborate with local governments, communities, learning institutions to ensure the implementation of national child rights frameworks at the local and regional levels

Collaborate with the private sector to supplement national financing and implementation of diverse child participation initiatives

Keep in mind diversity considerations i.e. language, format, disabilities, child-friendliness, gender, political and religious sensitivities during implementation of initiatives

Invest in projects that strengthen collaborations amongst child-focused agencies and other stakeholders, including the private sector, schools, research institutions, funding agencies and communities. This could lead to more innovative and sustainable ways of working with children over time

Ensure the mainstreaming, operationalization and implementation of national child rights frameworks on the ground through a national strategy plan and engaging different actors at the regional, local and community levels

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to become part of the national decision-making processes (children's parliament or national children's council)

Support the establishment or sustainment of children's resource centers across different parts of the country where children could meet, do recreational activities, conduct information-sharing or implement their initiatives

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for all children to voice out their concerns, provide feedback on existing national government initiatives or share ideas about potential programs or projects

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to learn about how their concerns, feedback or recommendations have been acted upon by adults or national government leaders

Broader recommendations to holistically advance child participation in different contexts



Fostering child participation through increased capacity & intergenerational learning



Sustaining child participation through enhanced practices, relational dynamics & systems



Institutionalizing child participation through enabling & accountable structures



NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Invest in projects that build on existing mechanisms for child participation at the community level. This could be in the form of policy or annual financial commitments to sustain and strengthen children's organizations and networks

Invest in the design and implementation of projects that help reassess and positively transform prevailing beliefs, cultures and systems that negate child participation in communities, government institutions and organizations

Allot clearly disaggregated budget for child participation initiatives and ensure that funds are equitably distributed towards the implementation of different aspects of child participation interventions (capacity-building, collaborations, sustainability and institutionalization of participatory processes, development of tools, technical assistance and intergenerational learning, etc.). Monitor and regulate public spending on child participation initiatives

Create a standardized framework for evaluating national progress in upholding child participation at different levels (i.e. implementation of national policies or plans

Establish mechanisms for accountability and institutionalization of child participation in different social sectors (agriculture, education, health, trade and development, environment, governance, etc.)

Provide opportunities for children to influence the design, implementation and monitoring of social services.

Establish child-friendly platforms at the national levels to build, strengthen and institutionalize networks of children. These networks are vital for children to meaningfully interact with and work together and build long-term trusting relationships with each other essential for nurturing a generation of responsive and committed citizens



INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Implement capacity-building projects or programs that enhance children's capacity for self-expression, leadership, and decision-making skills and adult's capacity to facilitate children's meaningful engagement

Collaborate with other key actors to finance, co-design and implement diverse child participation programs or initiatives that are more long-term, easily accessible to diverse children and which positively transform attitudes, norms and practices of the actors within intergovernmental and co-implementing regional and national governments and institutions

Collaborate with national governments to ensure the implementation of international child rights frameworks at the national, regional and local levels

Collaborate with the private sector to supplement global financing and implementation of diverse child participation initiatives

Keep in mind diversity considerations i.e. language, format, disabilities, child-friendliness, gender, political and religious sensitivities during implementation of initiatives

Ensure the mainstreaming, operationalization and implementation of international child rights frameworks at the national levels through a global strategy plan and engaging different actors at the national and regional levels

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to become part of the national decision-making processes (children's parliament or international children's councils)

Support the establishment or sustainment of groups comprised of children from across the globe who collaborate to co-design and implement initiatives at the international and regional levels

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for all children to voice out their concerns, provide feedback on existing international initiatives or share ideas about potential programs or projects

Institutionalize a digital or in-person mechanism for children to learn about how their concerns, feedback or recommendations have been acted upon by adults or global intergovernmental leaders

Create a standardized framework for evaluating countries' progress in upholding child participation at different levels (i.e. implementation of national policies, plans or initiatives)



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Maximize opportunities for educating one's self about children's rights and platforms for participation.

Maximize digital and in-person platforms (i.e. social media, community and school meetings) for discussing and sharing perspectives on social issues.

Engage with peers through governance structures and organizations in schools or communities (i.e. children and young people's councils and networks) to learn from each other and assess how to collectively contribute to the addressing of pressing social issues that affect young people's daily lives

Empower each other in sustaining engagement with key community/local decision-making processes (i.e. through creating support groups, encouraging and helping each other to be actively involved, etc.)

Ask adults questions about their current projects or initiatives that involve or directly affect children.

Share perspectives, concerns and recommendations about issues that directly or indirectly affect children's lives through existing channels or mechanisms.

Advocate for the establishment of mechanisms that will allow children to speak out about various issues and hold adults accountable to their commitment to uphold and protect children's rights.

Child Participation (through World Vision East Asia's Efforts) in Numbers

In the fiscal year 2022-2023, World Vision East Asia made significant strides in advancing child participation through its various initiatives.



304,741 Most Vulnerable Children (MVCs)

(155,418 girls | 149,323 boys) were involved in meaningful child engagement activities



Over 715,000 children

(365,069 girls | 350,203 boys) actively participated in child protection & participation initiatives



Over 3,800 children's groups

were supported by WV, resulting in a network of 110,500 empowered child leaders



More than 8,700 young minds

were engaged by research and data-driven approaches (5,449 girls | 3,275 boys)



Climate action saw **11,800 young advocates**

(7,048 girls | 4,092 boys)



An estimated **25,000 young people**

(14,143 girls | 11,725 boys) contributed to key decision-making processes

Efforts were inclusive with



10,817 children with disabilities

(5,413 girls | 5,404 boys) actively engaged

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our faithful donors and partners. These transformative achievements would not have been possible without their generous support.

THANK YOU!



World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization 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.



<https://www.wvi.org/eastasia>



<https://x.com/wvasia>



<https://www.youtube.com/@WVAsia>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/wveastasia>