ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children

Focus. Children's Voices on Their Right to The Future

ChildFund
Alliance

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The Rights of Women and Children with Reflections from Children on their Right to the Future

In a World Marked by Crises, Inequalities Relentlessly Persist, with Women and Children Being Most Vulnerable

In a world grappling with multiple crises and challenges—including armed conflicts, climate change, and poverty—inequalities and discriminations relentlessly persist for women and children.

As the most vulnerable and marginalized social group, they are at the greatest risk of social marginalization and rights violations. As a result, they face inequalities that limit their access to opportunities, resources, and services. With women and children representing more than half of the global population, their needs and rights must count. It is crucial, therefore, to have a comprehensive understanding of their living conditions and the discriminations they face.

For nearly a decade, ChildFund Alliance member WeWorld has published an index monitoring these living conditions, identifying root causes, and highlighting the factors necessary for improving the well-being of women and children worldwide. The World Index 2024, the ninth edition that is now a flagship report of ChildFund Alliance, assesses the promotion, exercise, and violation of the rights of women and children.

The Index provides a global ranking of 157 countries and identifies areas most urgently in need of intervention. Tragically, it concludes that it will take 113 years for women and children to witness the full implementation of rights assessed by the Index. Addressing these issues will require targeted and inclusive policies to dismantle barriers that prevent women and children from fully enjoying their rights and accessing essential resources.

As a network of 11 child-focused development and humanitarian organizations working in more than 70 countries, ChildFund Alliance is deeply committed to engaging children, families, and communities to create lasting change. Leveraging our 80 years of collective experience, our members work alongside children and their communities to address emerging threats, and to create processes to ensure their rights are promoted, respected, and realized.

It is why during development of this year's Index, we conducted a far-reaching child participation exercise with more than 10,000 children and adolescents in more than 40 countries where the Alliance operates. Our goal was to assess the extent to which children and adolescents involved in ChildFund Alliance projects realize their fundamental rights and to engage them in dialogue on issues directly affecting their daily lives.

From our consultations, we gleaned important insights on wide ranging issues including poverty, education, health care, violence, and the climate crisis. Despite differences in geography and culture, young people identified common themes and priority actions they believe are crucial for their future including access to and quality of education; protection from violence and discrimination; and the act of being encouraged and supported by adults. Further, their primary concerns about the future revolved around unemployment, poverty, and health epidemics.

Informed by our global consultations with children on the challenges they face, and the hopes they have for their future, ChildFund Alliance has developed a series of recommendations across all sectors in society and the international community to ensure children's voices are genuinely heard and considered.

Our overarching goal is to strengthen mechanisms for engaging and involving children and young people, and to promote an open and inclusive dialogue that takes into account their unique perspectives and specific needs. Such work builds upon our long-standing commitment to engage children and elevate their voices through our programs and policies.

Though significant work remains ahead, ChildFund Alliance is committed to engaging in collaborative efforts to create a more inclusive world where children and women are guaranteed their rights and are able to achieve their full potential. Through the World Index, we will continue to monitor the living conditions of women and children around the globe and consider their inclusion from multiple points of view.

Such work is essential if we are to break barriers to build a better future and achieve a world where no woman or child is left behind.

Simon Whyte
*Chairman, Board of Directors
ChildFund Alliance*

CHAPTER 1

Introducing the ChildFund Alliance World Index

1.1
A Tool to Measure the Implementation of the Rights of Women and Children

In a world grappling with ongoing crises across various domains—environmental, economic, social, educational, and more—inequalities and discriminations relentlessly persist, placing women and children at the greatest risk of social marginalization and rights violations.

To implement effective actions and propose targeted social policies for women and children, it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of their living conditions and the discrimination they face.

The ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children (henceforth the World Index) **illustrates women's and children's living conditions worldwide by measuring the implementation and violation of their rights across 157 countries.**

Human rights are not permanently guaranteed; they are a social construct—a tool devised by the international community to uphold the dignity and equality of all human beings. As such, they are susceptible to crises, social changes, historical contexts, and societal perspectives. **The fluid nature of societies implies that rights can be challenged or eroded due to political shifts, economic downturns, or cultural transformations. Therefore, the enforcement and protection of these rights require constant vigilance and active monitoring.**

Continuous assessment helps identify emerging threats and areas where rights are not being upheld, allowing for timely interventions. By maintaining an ongoing watch, the international community can adapt to changes, reinforce commitments, and ensure that the principles of equality and dignity are preserved for all, especially for those who are most vulnerable to rights violations.

As a matter of fact, despite more than 70 years having passed since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), human rights are still not universally respected, and they remain "a mirage for a good part of humanity" (Amnesty International, 2018). Since the UDHR, the international community has promoted numerous laws, conventions, and treaties to enhance global awareness and respect for human rights. In tandem with affirming the universality of human rights, specific instruments have been developed for particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups. Notably, these include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

The evolution of human rights is generally classified into three generations, each reflecting the shifting needs and priorities throughout history.

- ► **First-generation rights**, which emerged primarily in the 18th century, encompass civil and political rights, foundational to personal freedoms and democratic governance.
- ► **Second-generation rights** developed in the 19th and 20th centuries,

The Structure of the Report

The report is divided into four sections:

1. **Theoretical Framework**: This chapter outlines the theoretical framework, referencing the Human Rights-Based Approach and the concept of capabilities as the building blocks of the entire report.
2. **Index Results and Global Ranking**: This chapter presents the Index results and the global ranking of countries based on the implementation of women's and children's human rights. It includes data, global maps, infographics, and tables.
3. **Thematic Focus**: The 2024 edition focuses on the right of children and youth to have a future. ChildFund Alliance articulates its understanding of a "right to the future" as a lens to analyze and address the complex contexts children and youth are facing today and will face tomorrow. This section includes the voices of 10,000 children and youth from 41 countries consulted about their future. The section also contains examples of good practices implemented by the 11 ChildFund Alliance members to safeguard children's rights.
4. **Recommendations for Action**: The final section provides recommendations for action, with this edition focusing on child and youth participation.

What is the ChildFund Alliance World Index For?

The ChildFund Alliance World Index combines the diverse and extensive expertise of the 11 members of the Alliance. It is a comprehensive tool for analyzing the implementation of women's and children's rights across different areas of their lives from various perspectives. To summarize, the ChildFund Alliance World Index can be considered:

A KNOWLEDGE TOOL: Through mixed-method research, the report delves deep into the root causes of rights violations and identifies crucial factors for improving the well-being of women and children worldwide. It adopts a holistic perspective, considering the complexity of individuals' needs, aspirations, and rights. Consultation with children worldwide allows for a detailed level of disaggregation, capturing intersectional discrimination that affects different groups uniquely. This approach helps in understanding how various forms of discrimination intersect and impact children's lives and the implementation of their rights.

AN ADVOCACY AND POLICY TOOL: The report is grounded in an evidence- and data-driven approach, targeting areas most urgently needing intervention. It provides specific final recommendations that are actionable and tailored to address the identified issues. The tool offers a snapshot of status of individual countries regarding the implementation of women's and children's rights. This detailed, country-specific information is invaluable for policymakers and advocates in understanding the unique challenges and opportunities in different contexts.

AN AWARENESS-RAISING TOOL: The report is designed to raise awareness among a wide range of stakeholders, including the public, media, and policymakers, about the status of women's and children's rights at both national and global levels. It is not just a tool for insiders but aims to communicate effectively with a broader audience, including civil society. By presenting data, global maps, infographics, and compelling narratives, the report engages readers and gives them an overview on the critical issues faced by women and children. This increased awareness can drive public support and pressure for policy change.

The ChildFund Alliance Index serves as a critical resource for understanding, advocating, and raising awareness about the rights and living conditions of women and children globally. By providing comprehensive, detailed, and actionable insights, it plays a significant role in driving meaningful change.

Jake Lyell Photography

respond to the social injustices and harsh working conditions borne from the Industrial Revolution. These rights emphasize the necessity of ensuring decent living conditions for all and include economic, social, and cultural rights (Reid, 2019).

▶ In contemporary times, the global community is equipped with a robust framework of legal tools to safeguard human rights. The latest to gain prominence are the **third-generation rights**, which extend protections to particularly vulnerable groups such as women, children, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disability (PwD), indigenous populations, refugees, and migrants.

Despite significant progress, many people continue to face discrimination and violations of their rights. **Women**

and children are particularly at risk, not due to inherent vulnerabilities, but because a dominant male cultural context impedes their ability to develop and exercise their rights. This male-dominated environment defines societal norms through the perspectives of predominantly male, white, adult individuals, shaping social, economic, and political structures in their favor. Consequently, those who do not conform to these norms face exclusion and marginalization in various spheres, including education, employment, health, and political participation.

These groups in vulnerable and marginalized conditions contend with historical and structural inequalities limiting their access to opportunities, resources,

and services. Persistent gender discrimination and the failure to recognize children as rights holders are exacerbated by the structural reality of our societies, which are predominantly built on adult male-centric models. This inherent bias perpetuates systemic inequalities across sectors, from education and employment to healthcare and political representation.

In male-dominated societies, power and influence are predominantly held by adult men, with socio-cultural norms favoring their alleged superiority. Rigid gender stereotypes are perpetuated to maintain this system, prescribing 'appropriate' behaviors and roles to women and men: men are steered toward leadership and responsibility, while women are relegated to caregiving

and subordination. However, the issue extends beyond gender stereotypes and roles, with institutions, services, and structures also designed to prioritize male interests. Economic, educational, and social opportunities are often more accessible to adult men, thereby depriving other groups of the same resources and power. Additionally, social, political, and employment structures frequently favor adults over young people, who are perceived as inexperienced and as such are undervalued.

Within the categories of women and children, certain groups face compounded discrimination. Women may be marginalized not only because of their gender but also due to social class, sexual orientation, race, or disability. Similarly, children may encounter

intersectional discrimination related to age and other factors. For instance, girls may face dual discrimination due to their age and gender, experiencing specific forms of gender-based violence such as early forced marriage or female genital mutilation.

Of the 8.12 billion people on Earth in 2024, 4.08 billion are men and 4.04 billion are women (UN, 2024). One-fourth of the world's population in 2024 is under 14 years old (UNFPA, 2024). **Women and children together represent more than half of the global population: their needs and rights must count.**

Addressing these issues requires targeted policies that not only acknowledge but actively address these disparities. By fostering targeted policies

and frameworks, we can dismantle barriers that prevent women and children from fully enjoying their rights and accessing essential resources. It is imperative to advocate for comprehensive reforms that prioritize equity and empower marginalized groups, fostering a society where every individual's rights and well-being are safeguarded and respected.

> Women and children together represent more than half of the global population: their needs and rights must count.

1.2
The ChildFund Alliance World Index Theoretical Framework

1.2.1 THE HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

Human rights, despite their universal proclamation, have not achieved true universality as they were originally conceived within a predominantly male-dominated framework. This historical context often overlooks the distinct needs and perspectives of women and children. **To effectively assess and promote their rights, it is imperative to adopt a broad understanding of the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA).**

This approach ensures that policies, programs, and interventions prioritize the protection and agency of women's and children's human rights, acknowledging their rights as integral to human rights more broadly. Indeed, the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) is a framework, rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), that emerged in response to widespread human rights violations around the world. Its primary aim is to promote and protect internationally recognized fundamental human rights in all spheres of life. Its core principles are universality, interdependence and indivisibility, equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability and rule of law (UNDP, 2015).

▶ **UNIVERSALITY:** Human rights universally apply to all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, or any other classification.
▶ **INDIVISIBILITY:** Human rights are interconnected and cannot be separated into distinct categories. Civil and political rights hold equal importance

to economic, social, and cultural rights.
▶ **EQUALITY:** All human beings possess equal dignity and rights. This principle needs to address structural inequalities that hinder certain groups' access to rights and opportunities.
▶ **NON-DISCRIMINATION:** Discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, or any other personal characteristic is strictly prohibited.
▶ **INTERDEPENDENCE:** Human rights are interrelated; the enjoyment of one right can be influenced by the promotion and respect of other rights. For instance, the right to education may depend on access to healthcare.
▶ **PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION:** Every individual has the right to fully participate in society, necessitating supportive environments that foster their development and expression of potential.
▶ **ACCOUNTABILITY AND RULE OF LAW:** Human rights recognize individuals as active rights holders and establish responsibilities for those ensuring these rights are upheld. This includes accountability mechanisms ensuring justice, access to remedies for rights violations, and equitable distribution of resources and policy outcomes.

Based on these principles, adopting a Human Rights-Based Approach enables the systemic addressing of inequalities that disproportionately impact women and children, tackling the root causes of their rights violations. This perspective aims to empower individuals, enabling

women and children to see themselves as rights holders. In this way, they can actively participate in decisions that impact their lives, make their voices heard and claim their rights. This has a positive influence on their own lives and those of their community, breaking cycles of discrimination and disadvantage and improving their future prospects.

This involves, for instance, implementing measures to eradicate all forms of gender and age discrimination and promoting equality among men, women, and individuals of all genders. Moreover, recognizing the interdependence of rights means understanding how gender equality and children's rights intersect with other fundamental human rights such as health, education, and political participation. **This necessitates integrating a gender and child perspective across all sectors, and facilitating active participation of women, individuals of all genders, and children to ensure policies and programs are sensitive to gender and child-related issues**. To achieve the latter, it is required to address societal structural inequalities affecting cultural, economic, political, and health dimensions.

Furthermore, a HRBA asserts the inalienable rights of women and children, mandating all states and the international community to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights. This entails establishing clear obligations on duty bearers to enact laws, policies, and practices promoting gender equality and safeguarding children's rights.

Lastly, it underscores the indivisibility of human rights, acknowledging that violations of one right can impact others. For instance, denying girls access to education can detrimentally affect their health, economic opportunities, and safety. Therefore, this approach views the promotion, protection, and implementation of rights as a collaborative effort involving both rights holders and duty bearers across society[1].

The Human Rights-Based Approach is therefore our compass, guiding us in analyzing the data and information collected. As fundamental as it is to acknowledge universal human rights, it is also essential to consider some specific rights of the two categories that need to be safeguarded as well. For women, for example, sexual and reproductive rights or their greater vulnerability to systemic gender-based violence; for children, the importance of recognizing them as full subjects of rights, creating the conditions for their full participation. To specifically address the aspirations and needs of women and children, we therefore consider **the principles of gender and intergenerational equality**.

Gender equality means that men, women and other genders must be treated equally and without discrimination. Everyone, regardless of gender, must have equal access to resources and opportunities. The same applies to intergenerational equality: age must not be a factor of exclusion; instead, the specific rights of children must be recognized, protected and implemented so that they can develop fully.

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1 This approach is also used by WeWorld in the Report *"WECARE. Atlas of Maternal, Sexual, Reproductive, Child, and Adolescent Health"* (2023), and *"Flowing Futures. Atlas on Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Human Rights"* (2024). To consult the documents, see: https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/publications

1.2.2 THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH

To truly exercise their rights, women and children must be in the condition to implement and embody them. **Going from the simple assertion of a right to its exercise is not something to be taken for granted, and it requires having "capabilities"** (Sen, 2000). Capabilities represent the factual possibilities that people have for pursuing and achieving their own goals. The prerequisite to exercising capabilities is being free to choose according to one's aspirations and values.

Capabilities can be also understood as fundamental human rights. In this way, the emphasis is on the concrete exercise of human rights, rather than their mere recognition, and on the need to create real opportunities. In fact, the acquisition of capabilities does not depend exclusively on individuals but is affected by the specific environmental and cultural context where people live. Hence, some conditions must be in place (norms, social and cultural factors, absence of gender and generational discriminations) to enable people to thrive.

Consequently, to speak of capabilities as human rights is to argue for the existence of corresponding obligations, primarily on the part of governments, to ensure that all citizens enjoy their capabilities. Therefore, all capabilities require material, social and political conditions that, in turn, necessitate institutional action (Nussbaum, 2011).

Supporting the acquisition of capabilities is not enough unless actions on the existing social and cultural norms are carried out simultaneously. Specifically, it is necessary to promote a culture of respect for different identities and fight against discrimination, stereotypes,

and patriarchal culture. Indeed, in a world designed by and for men, women's and children's rights are never fully guaranteed, and they often lack concrete opportunities to exercise them, hence the capabilities.

- **WOMEN AND CHILDREN MUST BE RECOGNIZED AND MUST RECOGNIZE THEMSELVES AS RIGHTS HOLDERS SO THAT THEY CAN CLAIM AND EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS**
- **WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAVE INALIENABLE RIGHTS THAT MUST BE RESPECTED, PROTECTED AND FULFILLED BY DUTY BEARERS**
- **TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IT IS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS OF ACQUISITION OF CAPABILITIES**
- **RIGHTS ARE COMPLETELY FULFILLED WHEN CAPABILITIES ARE PROMOTED WITHIN A SYSTEM OF REGULATIONS TO PROTECT THEM**
- **THE ACQUISITION OF CAPABILITIES IS AFFECTED BY ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS**
- **FOR A REAL EXERCISE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, IT IS NECESSARY TO ACT ON BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL LEVELS, PROMOTING CAPABILITIES AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND LEGAL NORMS**

1.3
How the ChildFund Alliance World Index is Formed

The World Index is a synthetic index comprising 30 indicators relevant to evaluating the implementation of women's and children's rights globally. It provides a comprehensive global ranking of countries, sorted in descending order based on the level of implementation of women's and children's rights.

The original methodology, developed by WeWorld, and introduced in the WeWorld Index 2015, was refined in the WeWorld Index 2022. Such methodology allows for further processing: the overall Index is the result of the aggregation of three sub-indexes (Context, Children's and Women's), which in turn comprise 5 dimensions each, for a total of 15 dimensions considered. Each dimension comprises 2 indicators, for a total of 30.

This structure is grounded in the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) framework and the concept of capabilities. The Context Sub-Index examines various aspects—social, cultural, environmental, economic, political, among others—of the contexts in which women, children, and youth live. The goal is to assess whether these contexts facilitate the development of capabilities crucial for their well-being and agency.

Simultaneously, the Index includes two other Sub-Indexes: the Children's Sub-Index and the Women's Sub-Index. These components are designed to scrutinize the implementation of specific rights pertaining to children and women. They aim to evaluate the extent to which these rights are realized and upheld within the diverse socio-economic and cultural landscapes across the surveyed countries. This comprehensive approach not only identifies areas of strength and progress but also highlights persistent challenges and disparities, providing a holistic view of the status of children's and women's rights globally.

The need to assess the performance of countries separately in relation to the three sub-indexes stems from a critical assumption: in order to ensure respect, protection, and promotion of human rights comprehensively, it is essential to consider the specific needs and risks associated with gender and generations.

Without adopting an intersectional approach, the full realization of the rights and capabilities of women and children cannot be achieved. This can only be accomplished through the design, implementation, and monitoring of appropriate policies that are both multidimensional and tailored to their specific needs. This is especially crucial in contexts characterized by significant challenges, widespread poverty, rights violations, and armed conflict.

As elaborated in the second chapter, some countries might exhibit highly favorable performance in the Context Sub-Index while concurrently showing markedly unfavorable performance in the Children's Sub-Index and Women's Sub-Index. This disparity underscores a critical point: **merely establishing conducive general contexts is insufficient if policies addressing the distinct needs of women and children are not actively promoted and effectively implemented.** This observation highlights the necessity for targeted interventions and policies that are tailored to address the specific challenges faced by these groups in vulnerable and marginalized conditions as well as their needs and aspirations.

Bridging this gap requires not only creating supportive environments but also ensuring that these environments translate into tangible improvements in the lives and rights of women and children.

> The World Index is a synthetic index comprising 30 indicators relevant to evaluating the implementation of women's and children's rights globally. It provides a comprehensive global ranking of countries, sorted in descending order based on the level of implementation of women's and children's rights.

Table 1
The Structure of the ChildFund Alliance World Index

CONTEXT SUB-INDEX	ENVIRONMENT	1 - CO2 emissions per capita
		2 - Level of water stress
	HOUSING	3 - People using safely managed drinking water services
		4 - People using safely managed sanitation services
	CONFLICTS AND WARS	5 - Global Peace Index
		6 - Refugees per country of origin
	DEMOCRACY AND SAFETY	7 - Global Democracy Index
		8 - Intentional homicide rate
	ACCESS TO INFORMATION	9 - People with access to electricity
		10 - Individuals using Internet
CHILDREN'S SUB-INDEX	CHILDREN'S HEALTH	11 - Under-five mortality rate
		12 - Adolescent mortality rate
	CHILDREN'S EDUCATION	13 - Lower secondary completion rate
		14 - Share of youth not in education, employment or training
	CHILDREN'S HUMAN CAPITAL	15 - Population covered by at least one social protection benefit
		16 - Government expenditure on education
	CHILDREN'S ECONOMIC CAPITAL	17 - Unemployment rate
		18 - Poverty headcount ratio at $6.85 a day (2017 PPP$)
	VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN	19 - Children out of school
		20 - Adolescent fertility rate
WOMEN'S SUB-INDEX	WOMEN'S HEALTH	21 - Lifetime risk of maternal mortality
		22 - Life expectancy at birth, female
	WOMEN'S EDUCATION	23 - Educational attainment (upper secondary), female
		24 - Tertiary school enrolment (gross), female
	WOMEN'S ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	25 - Vulnerable employment, female
		26 - Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate
	WOMEN'S DECISION-MAKING PARTICIPATION	27 - Women in ministerial level position
		28 - Women in senior and middle management positions
	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	29 - Intimate partner violence, female
		30 - Intentional homicide rate, female

An Intersectional Lens on Women's and Children's Rights

The term "intersectionality", coined in 1989 by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, describes how race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics can intersect and overlap. Intersectionality specifically highlights the overlapping of different social identities and the various forms of discrimination, oppression, or domination that certain categories of people face. **This concept entails that groups such as children, women, those below the poverty line, ethnic minorities, people of color, individuals from the LGBTQIA+ community, indigenous communities, refugees, and people with disabilities are most exposed to rights violations** (Crenshaw, 1989).

Consequently, these groups are more at risk of experiencing overlapping forms of discrimination (e.g., gender, generational, ethnic, racial). **The intersectional perspective thus emphasizes the cumulative effects of discrimination and systematic rights violations for all individuals living outside the male-centric model.** If society primarily favors the white, adult, heterosexual male model, those who do not conform to this model may suffer various forms of discrimination. Intersectionality serves as a lens that allows for the consideration of these marginalized identities collectively, while acknowledging the specific forms of exclusion each person faces.

Women and children are identified as macro-groups in this context because they are often the most deprived of their rights and exemplify this trend. **For them, intersectionality refers to the discrimination they face not only as women and minors but also as members of other social groups (defined by ethnicity, social class, and other factors) subject to prejudice. These multiple forms of discrimination create a cumulative disadvantage that current law and legal practice do not comprehensively address.**

A limitation of the Index, common to all synthetic indexes developed in such way, regards its reliance on national data to create rankings, resulting in an average that may flatten diverse experiences and fail to account for the intersectionality of discrimination. This generalization risks overlooking the specific and overlapping forms of discrimination that various groups experience. This is at least partially compensated for by the global child consultation[2], which provides disaggregated data on young respondents along several dimensions, providing a more detailed picture of intersectional and multiple discrimination. **Intersectionality is, in fact, a critical approach to addressing violations of women's and children's rights: by highlighting how structural inequalities affect their lives, it recognizes and addresses the multiple forms of oppression that can overlap and interact.**

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2 See: Chapter 3, ChildFund Alliance Global Consultation on the Right to the Future

New Features of the ChildFund Alliance World Index

In 2015, when the 2030 Agenda was adopted by 193 countries, WeWorld launched the WeWorld Index series, which is now a flagship product of ChildFund Alliance. During the past nine years, WeWorld has periodically monitored the living conditions of women and children in approximately 160 countries around the world, considering the guarantee of and infringement upon their rights from multiple points of view: social, economic, political, environmental, etc.

This year, some new features have been introduced:

▶ **A Collective Effort:** The 2024 Index is a collaborative product of the members of ChildFund Alliance, a network of 11 child-focused humanitarian and development agencies committed to helping children and their families overcome poverty and the fundamental conditions that prevent children from reaching their full potential. Together, we reach nearly 30 million children and family members in more than 70 countries. Our members work to end violence and exploitation against children, provide expertise in emergencies and disasters to mitigate negative impacts on children and their communities, and engage children, families, and communities to create lasting change. The Alliance has supported and guided the Index implementation through diverse perspectives and a steadfast commitment to women and children. The children's global consultation (see Chapter 3) was made possible by the joint efforts of the 11 ChildFund Alliance members and their local partners. Thanks to the territorial roots of these organizations, the networks built, and the extensive fieldwork carried out over many years, we have collected not only testimonies but also the expertise and skills that bring this document to life.

▶ **The Voices of Children and Youth:** Previously the Index has traditionally relied on a blend of quantitative and qualitative data. This year, our focus centers on a global consultation involving more than 10,000 children from 41 countries where ChildFund Alliance operates, all engaged through our projects and activities. This consultation enriches our findings through personal testimonies, delving into children's and young people's fears, expectations, and priorities for their future. It fosters direct dialogue concerning their rights and needs. Moreover, it incorporates disaggregated data, which goes beyond gender to encompass ethnicity, socio-economic status, migrant background, and disability. This approach addresses the limitations of aggregate data by providing deeper insights into inequalities and differences within the sample. As a result, it offers a more nuanced and precise portrayal of reality, highlighting instances of multiple discrimination.
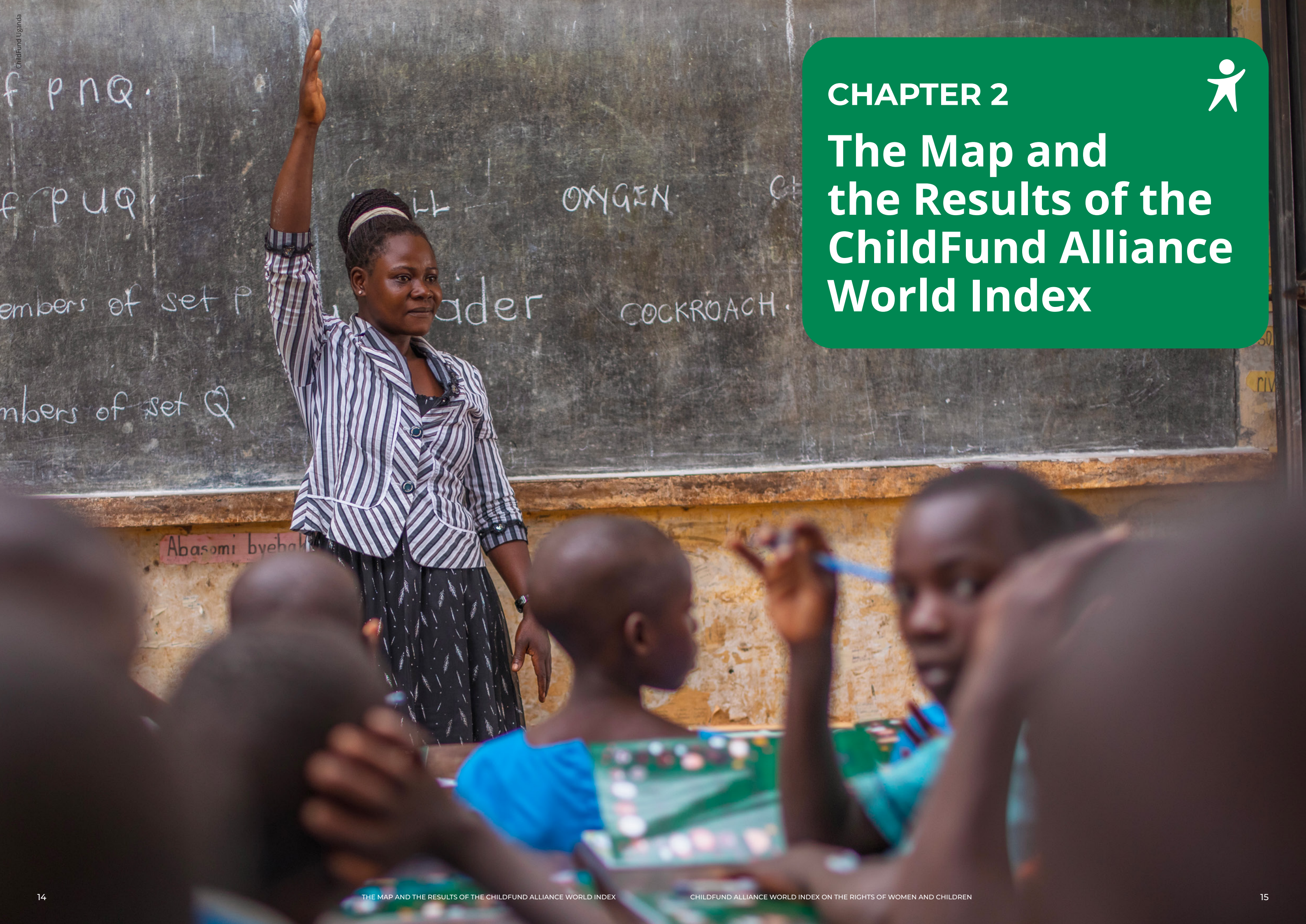
CHAPTER 2

The Map and the Results of the ChildFund Alliance World Index

2.1
ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children: the 2024 Global Map

Advanced Human Rights Implementation
Equal or more than 85

Ranking		Score			
1	🏃 Sweden	91.1	12	Ireland	86.4
2	Iceland	90.8	13	Lithuania	86.3
3	Norway	89.5	13	🏃 New Zealand	86.3
4	Switzerland	89.0	13	Portugal	86.3
5	🏃 Australia	88.5	16	🏃 France	86.2
5	Denmark	88.5	16	United Kingdom	86.2
7	Slovenia	88.4	18	Belgium	85.9
8	Finland	88.3	19	🏃 Latvia	85.8
9	Netherlands	88.1	20	🏃 Canada	85.4
10	Estonia	87.3	21	🏃 Spain	85.1
11	Austria	86.5			

Strong Human Rights Implementation
Between 75 and 84

Ranking		Score			
22	🏃 Germany	84.5	35	Greece	81.1
23	Luxembourg	84.2	36	🏃 United States	80.9
24	Poland	83.6	37	Israel	80.0
24	Singapore	83.6	38	🏃 Japan	79.9
26	Cyprus	82.9	39	Bulgaria	77.5
27	Croatia	82.2	40	Belarus	76.4
28	Malta	81.9	41	Montenegro	76.1
29	Czech Republic	81.8	42	Serbia	75.4
30	Hungary	81.6	43	Uruguay	75.3
31	🏃 Chile	81.5	44	🏃 Argentina	75.1
31	🏃 South Korea	81.5	44	Romania	75.1
31	Slovakia	81.5	46	Albania	75.1
34	🏃 Italy	81.4			

Moderate Human Rights Implementation
Between 65 and 74

Ranking		Score			
47	Moldova	74.7	67	Bahrain	68.3
48	Malaysia	74.6	68	Trinidad and Tobago	68.2
49	Kazakhstan	74.0	69	🏃 Tunisia	68.0
50	Russia	73.4	70	🏃 Mexico	67.5
51	🏃 Mongolia	72.8	71	🏃 Armenia	67.2
52	Costa Rica	72.4	72	🏃 Ecuador	67.1
53	Bosnia and Herzegovina	72.3	73	United Arab Emirates	66.9
54	🏃 Georgia	72.1	74	🏃 Paraguay	66.7
55	Kyrgyz Republic	72.0	75	🏃 Fiji	66.3
56	🏃 Brazil	71.9	76	Mauritius	66.1
57	Cuba	71.1	77	Guyana	65.8
57	Panama	71.1	78	🏃 Bolivia	65.7
59	Macedonia	70.5	79	Colombia	65.6
60	🏃 Peru	70.1	80	🏃 Vietnam	65.5
61	🏃 Ukraine	69.6	81	Azerbaijan	65.4
62	Maldives	69.5	82	Dominican Republic	65.3
63	🏃 Turkey	69.2	83	Jamaica	65.2
64	China	68.9			
65	🏃 Thailand	68.5			
66	Uzbekistan	68.4			

Basic Human Rights Implementation
Between 55 and 64

Ranking		Score
84	🏃 Philippines	64.9
85	Oman	64.5
85	Tajikistan	64.5
87	🏃 Indonesia	64.3
88	Algeria	63.6
89	Jordan	63.3
90	Bhutan	63.1
91	🏃 El Salvador	63.0
92	🏃 Morocco	62.8
93	Iran	62.3
93	Kuwait	62.3
93	🏃 Palestine	62.3
96	Egypt	61.9
97	Belize	61.8
98	Qatar	61.6
99	Saudi Arabia	61.1
100	🏃 Nicaragua	60.0
101	Cabo Verde	59.5
102	🏃 Sri Lanka	59.3
103	Suriname	59.0
103	Vanuatu	59.0
105	🏃 Timor-Leste	58.8
106	🏃 Honduras	58.3
107	Venezuela	58.1
108	Namibia	56.4
109	🏃 Lebanon	56.3
110	🏃 South Africa	56.1
111	🏃 India	55.5

Limited Human Rights Implementation
Between 45 and 54

Ranking		Score
112	Botswana	54.9
113	🏃 Bangladesh	53.9
113	🏃 Guatemala	53.9
115	🏃 Myanmar	53.8
116	🏃 Cambodia	53.4
117	🏃 Ghana	53.2
118	🏃 Laos	51.8
119	🏃 Kenya	51.0
120	🏃 Papua New Guinea	50.4
121	🏃 Nepal	49.9
122	Djibouti	49.7
123	Zimbabwe	47.5
124	🏃 Senegal	46.5
125	🏃 Gambia	46.3
126	Eswatini	46.2
127	Nigeria	45.3
127	🏃 Zambia	45.3
129	Comoros	45.1
129	Togo	45.1

Minimal Human Rights Implementation
Equal or less than 45

Ranking		Score			
131	Cote d'Ivoire	44.8	151	🏃 Burundi	36.6
132	🏃 Rwanda	44.5	152	🏃 DR Congo	35.5
133	Cameroon	44.2	153	🏃 Afghanistan	34.3
134	Lesotho	43.9	154	🏃 Mali	33.9
135	Pakistan	43.0	155	🏃 Niger	30.7
136	🏃 Mozambique	42.9	156	Central African Republic	27.4
137	🏃 Uganda	41.9	157	Chad	26.7
138	Guinea-Bissau	41.8			
139	Angola	41.3			
140	🏃 Madagascar	41.0			
141	🏃 Malawi	40.9			
142	🏃 Tanzania	40.3			
143	🏃 Benin	40.2			
144	🏃 Sierra Leone	39.7			
145	Mauritania	39.3			
146	Liberia	39.1			
147	🏃 Guinea	38.9			
148	Yemen	38.2			
149	🏃 Ethiopia	37.6			
150	🏃 Burkina Faso	37.4			

🏃 ChildFund Alliance members

🏃 ChildFund Alliance countries of operations

⬜ Data not available

2.2
ChildFund Alliance World Index 2024 Results

The World Index 2024 is reflective of 157 countries. Countries lacking more than 6 indicators out of 30 were excluded (the entire methodology is available in the Appendix).

The following countries have been excluded from this edition due to a lack of data: Bahamas, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, Congo Republic, Eritrea, Micronesia, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, São Tomé and Príncipe, Syria, and Turkmenistan.

! The most recent date are from 2023. Therefore, not all recent global events could be reflected in the Index.

The global ranking orders countries by their level of women's and children's human rights implementation on a scale ranging from 0 to 100 (Figure 1).

Highlights from the World Index

▸ The ChildFund Alliance World Index 2024 evaluates 157 countries on their implementation of women's and children's human rights.

▸ As of 2023, 1 in 3 children and more than 1 in 4 women were living in countries with limited or minimal human rights implementation.

▸ At the current pace, it will take 113 years for women and children to witness the full implementation of rights assessed by the World Index across all countries.

▸ The contexts where women and children live today are less democratic and safe compared to the past, although there are improvements in access to information and WASH (WAter, Sanitation, and Hygiene) services.

▸ Significant progress has been registered in children's health, but their educational rights have stagnated since 2020, likely due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

▸ Women's levels of education and participation in decision-making are on the rise. However, women remain the most vulnerable and marginalized social group globally, experiencing the highest likelihood of human rights violations.

In 2023, **1 child out of 3** and more than **1 out of 4 women** were living in a country with **limited or minimal human rights implementation**

Figure 1
Number of countries per tier of human rights implementation and their respective population of women and children

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION	TIER	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	CHILDREN'S POPULATION (0-19 YEARS OLD) IN 2023*	WOMEN'S POPULATION IN 2023
Advanced	Equal or more than 85	21	76,769,999	181,208,643
Strong	Between 75 and 84	24	183,781,797	438,761,520
Moderate	Between 65 and 74	36	629,543,319	1,249,383,856
Basic	Between 55 and 64	27	804,614,140	1,136,763,305
Limited	Between 45 and 54	17	311,847,469	349,700,056
Minimal	Equal or less than 45	26	530,846,056	508,979,731

* In this case, the figure is derived from the sum of two population groups: children between 0-14 years and adolescents between 15-19 years. Sources used by World Bank 2023: United Nations Population Division. World Population Prospects: 2022 Revision; Statistical databases and publications of national statistical institutes; Eurostat: Population Statistics; United Nations Statistics Division. Population and Vital Statistics Report.

At the current rate, **it will take 113 years** for women and children **to see the rights** considered by the World Index **implemented in all countries**[3]

In 2024, the global average of the Index is 62 out of 100; in 2015, it was 59.3. This is a relatively minor improvement, and the situation seems to have stagnated since 2022.

In 2024, the top five countries in the ranking come from Northern Europe (Sweden, Iceland, and Norway) and Continental Europe (Switzerland) plus Australia, which is improving, earning more than three points since 2015 and rising five ranks (Figure 3)[4].

Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa afflicted by wars and protracted crises (Mali, Niger, Central African Republic, Chad) and Afghanistan continue to rank at the bottom (Figure 4).

Looking at the performance of geographic areas (Figure 5), the locations experiencing the greatest change in score are Central and West Africa (+4.7) and Middle East and North Africa (+4.5). However, it should be highlighted that, since the first edition of the Index, these regions continue to receive low scores, particularly in Central and West

....

3 Comparing values calculated for the different time steps, we can assess a rough projection of the variation rate of the Index and the sub-indexes. From the yearly variation rate, we compute the years' number still needed to reach advanced human rights implementation, namely a score of 100. It is important to note that this method assumes the variation rate as constant over time and cannot provide an estimate when the variation rate is negative.

4 If one wants to evaluate the progress of a country in the Index, it is necessary to look both at the score and rank. Indeed, to understand a country's trend over time, it is not sufficient to only consider its position in the ranking. That is because significant changes in the final rank do not always correspond to notable changes in the score. For further details of how the ChildFund Alliance Index is constructed, see the methodology in the Appendix.

Figure 2
The Global Performance over the years as measured by the World Index
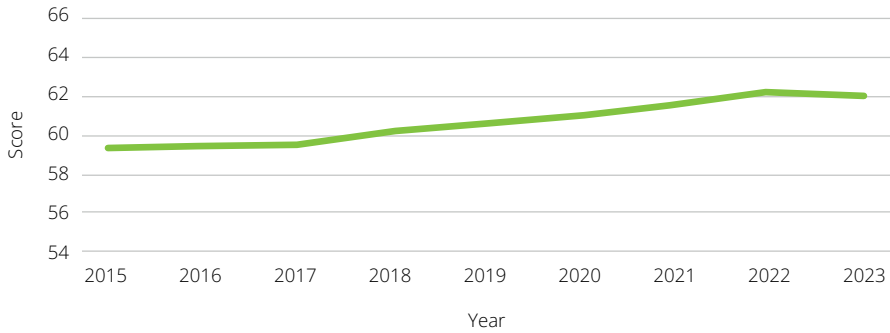
Figure 3
The top 5 countries in the Index 2024 and 2015

COUNTRY	INDEX 2024 (157 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)		INDEX 2015 (163 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)	
	Rank	Score out of 100	Rank	Score out of 100
Sweden	1	91.10	3	89.5
Iceland	2	90.80	1	90.4
Norway	3	89.50	2	89.7
Switzerland	4	89.00	5	87.3
Australia	5	88.50	10	85.3

Figure 4
The bottom 5 countries in the Index 2024 and 2015

COUNTRY	INDEX 2024 (157 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)		INDEX 2015 (163 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)	
	Rank	Score out of 100	Rank	Score out of 100
Afghanistan	153	34.30	158	31.8
Mali	154	33.90	156	31.7
Niger	155	30.70	160	28.4
Central African Republic	156	27.40	162	23.6
Chad	157	26.70	163	23.1

Figure 5
The geographic areas' scores in the Index 2024 and 2015

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2015 OUT OF 100	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2024 OUT OF 100	TIER IN THE INDEX 2015	TIER IN THE INDEX 2024	SCORE VARIATION
West Europe and Other States	81.9	83.3	Strong HR implementation	Strong HR implementation	+1.4 ⬆
East Europe and Central Asia	69.3	70.8	Moderate HR implementation	Moderate HR implementation	+1.5 ⬆
Latin America and Caribbean	65.1	68.5	Moderate HR implementation	Moderate HR implementation	+3.4 ⬆
East Asia and Pacific	65.2	68.2	Moderate HR implementation	Moderate HR implementation	+3 ⬆
Middle East and North Africa	53.3	57.8	Limited HR implementation	Basic HR implementation	+4.5 ⬆
South Asia	49.4	53	Limited HR implementation	Limited HR implementation	+3.6 ⬆
East and South Africa	40.7	43.8	Minimal HR implementation	Minimal HR implementation	+3.1 ⬆
Central and West Africa	38	42.7	Minimal HR implementation	Minimal HR implementation	+4.7 ⬆

Figure 6
Performance in each dimension of the World Index: a 2015 vs 2024 comparison*

WORLD, 2023**

WORLD, 2015

* The radar chart allows us to understand if the dimensions relating to the context, women, and children have improved or worsened over time. To read it, one has to look at how the trajectories approach or move away from zero. The closer the radar trajectory gets to zero, the worse that dimension gets; the closer it gets to 100, the better.

** The World Index 2024 considers data referring to 2023

Africa. As investigated in past editions, slower progress is registered for areas at higher levels of rights implementation (West Europe and Other States and East Europe and Central Asia).

Indeed, the risk is that once a certain level of development has been achieved, and basic rights have been provided, countries tend to slow down, and the effort to guarantee such services and rights is reduced or becomes stationary. Furthermore, if this level of development is not consolidated and maintained, people in most vulnerable and marginalized conditions - including women and children - could be easily exposed to external shocks (e.g., wars and conflicts, pandemics, economic crises, etc.). Factors of exclusion also persist in the best performing countries.

Looking at the overall performance with respect to the dimensions considered by the World Index (Figure 6), the trend appears generally positive. The dimensions that show the major improvement since 2015 in the Context Sub-Index are Access to Information (+13.4 points) and Housing (+4.3 points).

In the Children's Sub-Index, the Health dimension has improved the most (+4.2 points), while in the Women's Sub-Index, the greatest improvement is seen in Education (+4.3 points). On the downside, the dimensions of Conflicts and Wars (-2.2 points) and Democracy and Safety (-1.9 points) have worsened, particularly in South Asia, East Europe, and Central Asia.

The methodology developed for the 2022 edition of the Index introduced the possibility of separately monitoring the context in which women and children live, and their individual conditions through the three sub-indexes (Context, Children, and Women), which together constitute the final World Index (see Chapter 1). Each Sub-Index is discussed in more detail in the following pages.

A Comparison with the Human Development Index (HDI)

The World Index on Women's and Children's Rights is a synthetic index that draws inspiration from tools such as UNDP's Human Development Index. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic used to rank countries by levels of human development, considering three main dimensions: life expectancy, education, and per capita income. The HDI measures average performance in these areas to assess and compare the well-being and quality of life among nations.

The World Index is also a synthetic index consisting of 30 indicators aggregated into five dimensions, which in turn are aggregated into three sub-indexes.

The Index was created with a similar intent as the Human Development Index.

The graph below, which shows countries' scores in the World Index and the HDI Index, denotes a significant level of correlation between the two instruments (Figure 7). This suggests that the World Index and the HDI share common underlying factors, such as health, education, and economic well-being. It also implies that the World Index could be a valuable tool for further analysis, offering new insights or perspectives that complement the established HDI framework.

Figure 7
The comparison between the Human Development Index (HDI) and the ChildFund Alliance World Index

Legend:
- SOUTH ASIA
- EAST AND SOUTH AFRICA
- EAST EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA
- MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
- LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN
- WEST EUROPE AND OTHER STATES
- CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA
- EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC
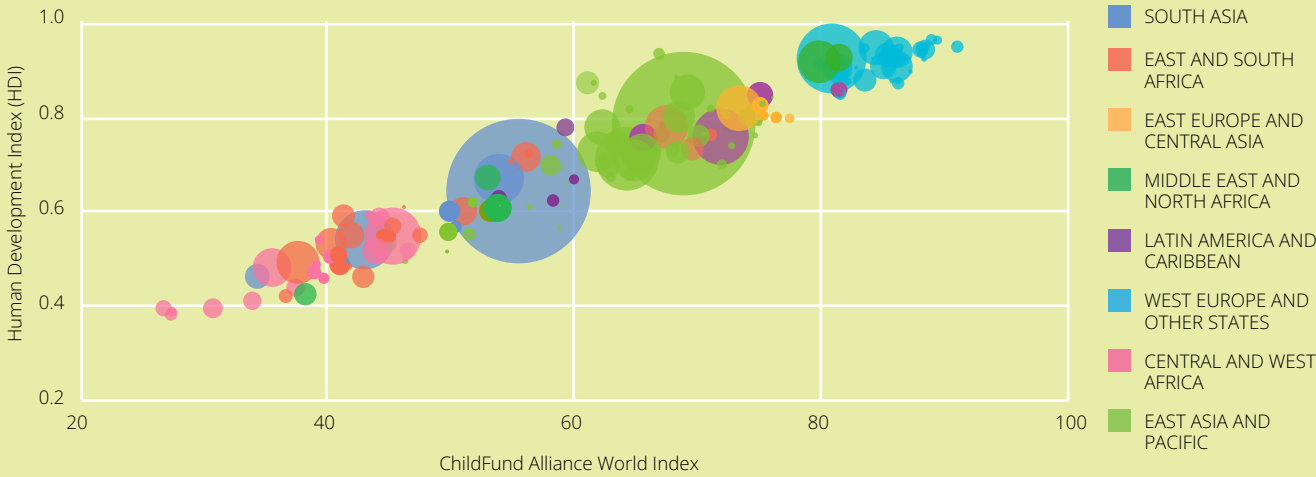
2.3
The Context Sub-Index Global Map

🚶‍♂️ ChildFund Alliance members

🚶‍♂️ ChildFund Alliance countries of operations

⬜ Data not available

▇ Equal or more than 85

Advanced Human Rights Implementation

Ranking		Score
1	Iceland	92.6
2	Switzerland	90.1
3 🚶	Sweden	89.9
4	Norway	88.1
5	Denmark	87.4
6	Austria	86.9
7 🚶	New Zealand	86.6
8	Finland	86.5
8	United Kingdom	86.5
10	Portugal	86.0
11	Netherlands	85.8
11	Slovenia	85.8
13	Luxembourg	85.5
14 🚶	Australia	85.3
15 🚶	Latvia	85.1
16	Lithuania	85.0
16	Malaysia	85.0

▇ Between 75 and 84

Strong Human Rights Implementation

Ranking		Score
18	Slovakia	84.9
19	Hungary	84.8
20	Ireland	84.6
21	Estonia	84.4
22 🚶	Chile	84.0
23 🚶	Canada	83.6
23 🚶	Germany	83.6
25 🚶	Spain	83.3
26 🚶	France	83.2
26	Greece	83.2
28	Czech Republic	82.9
28 🚶	Japan	82.9
30	Romania	82.5
31	Croatia	81.8
32 🚶	Italy	81.4
33	Poland	80.6
34	Malta	80.5
35	Belgium	80.4
36	Cyprus	79.4
37	Singapore	78.5
38	Bulgaria	77.8
39 🚶	South Korea	76.9
40	Bhutan	76.8
41	Albania	76.7
41	Uruguay	76.7
43	Bosnia and Herzegovina	75.4
43 🚶	United States	75.4
45	Montenegro	75.1

▇ Between 65 and 74

Moderate Human Rights Implementation

Ranking		Score
46	Kyrgyz Republic	74.9
47	Moldova	74.4
48	Costa Rica	74.3
49 🚶	Paraguay	74.0
50 🚶	Argentina	73.9
51 🚶	Morocco	73.7
52	Israel	73.4
53	Belarus	73.2
54 🚶	Brazil	73.0
55 🚶	Bolivia	72.8
56 🚶	Timor-Leste	72.7
57 🚶	Fiji	72.6
57	Jordan	72.6
59 🚶	Maldives	72.5
60	Panama	72.1
61 🚶	Peru	71.5
62	Serbia	71.1
63	Vanuatu	70.8
64 🚶	Tunisia	70.6
65 🚶	Indonesia	70.4
65 🚶	Mongolia	70.4
67 🚶	Turkey	70.2
68 🚶	Palestine	70.1
69	Guyana	69.6
70 🚶	Georgia	69.4
70 🚶	Philippines	69.4
72	Macedonia	69.1
73	Kazakhstan	69.0
74 🚶	Bangladesh	68.7
74 🚶	Thailand	68.7
76	Djibouti	68.6
77 🚶	Ecuador	68.4
78	Jamaica	68.2
79 🚶	Vietnam	67.5
80	Belize	67.4
81	Azerbaijan	67.3
82 🚶	El Salvador	66.8
83	Egypt	66.4
84 🚶	Armenia	66.3
84	China	66.3
86 🚶	India	66.1
87	Suriname	65.9
88	Cuba	65.6
88	Dominican Republic	65.6
88	Trinidad and Tobago	65.6
91 🚶	Ghana	65.4

▇ Between 55 and 64

Basic Human Rights Implementation

Ranking		Score		Ranking		Score
92	Colombia	64.9		108 🚶	Papua New Guinea	61.3
93	Russia	64.7		109 🚶	Mexico	61.1
94 🚶	Guatemala	64.4		110	Cabo Verde	60.0
95	Oman	64.2		110	Mauritius	60.0
96	Algeria	64.1		112 🚶	Lebanon	59.7
97	Uzbekistan	63.8		113	Lesotho	58.7
98	Tajikistan	63.6		114	Botswana	58.1
99 🚶	Sri Lanka	63.5		115	Pakistan	57.8
100	Iran	63.3		116 🚶	Senegal	57.5
100	Cambodia	63.3		117 🚶	Gambia	57.2
100 🚶	Laos	63.3		118	Kuwait	56.8
100 🚶	Ukraine	63.3		119 🚶	South Africa	56.3
104 🚶	Nepal	63.1		120	Venezuela	56.2
105 🚶	Honduras	62.8		121	Saudi Arabia	55.5
106 🚶	Nicaragua	62.3		122 🚶	Myanmar	55.4
107	Bahrain	61.8				

▇ Between 45 and 54

Limited Human Rights Implementation

Ranking		Score
123	United Arab Emirates	54.6
123 🚶	Cote d'Ivoire	54.6
125 🚶	Mauritania	53.6
125	Namibia	53.6
127	Yemen	53.2
128 🚶	Kenya	52.7
128 🚶	Nigeria	52.7
130 🚶	Cameroon	52.1
131	Comoros	50.5
132	Angola	50.3
133 🚶	Zambia	50.2
134	Zimbabwe	50,0
135	Guinea-Bissau	49.1
136	Liberia	48.9
137	Qatar	48.8
138 🚶	Benin	48.7
138 🚶	Tanzania	48.7
140	Eswatini	48.4
141 🚶	Rwanda	47.2
142 🚶	Malawi	46.7
143 🚶	Afghanistan	46.4
144 🚶	Guinea	46.2

▇ Equal or less than 45

Minimal Human Rights Implementation

| Ranking		Score
145 🚶	Mali	44.6
146 🚶	Uganda	44.4
147 🚶	Madagascar	44.3
148 🚶	Mozambique	43.5
149 🚶	Sierra Leone	42.4
150	Togo	42.3
151 🚶	Burkina Faso	41.2
152 🚶	Niger	38.5
153 🚶	Ethiopia	36.7
154 🚶	DR Congo	33.1
155 🚶	Burundi	32.3
156	Chad	28.7
157	Central African Republic	24.6

In 2024, the global average of the Context Sub-Index is 64.6; in 2015, it was 61.8 (Figure 8). This means that the contexts in which women and children live are slowly improving, at least in some respects.

Upon closer examination, however, some of these contexts are becoming less peaceful, less secure, and less democratic (Figure 9). As previously reported, there is a deterioration in the dimensions of Conflicts and Wars (which include indicators 5. Global Peace Index and 6. Refugees by Country of Origin) as well as Democracy and Security (indicators 7. Global Democracy Index and 8. Intentional Homicide Rate). On a positive note, the Access to Information dimension shows significant improvement (indicators 9. People with Access to Electricity and 10. People using the Internet). Additionally, the Housing dimension has also improved (indicators 3. People using Safely Managed Water Sources and 4. People using Safely Managed Sanitation Services).

In terms of country rankings, countries in Northern Europe and Continental Europe rank among the top five, with higher scores than in the General Index (Figure 10). Notably, countries tend to report better scores in the Context Sub-Index compared to the Children's Sub-Index and especially the Women's Sub-Index.

The lowest positions are consistently occupied by countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 11).

All geographic areas show growth compared to their performance in 2015, but with some differences (Figure 12). The biggest increase is recorded in South Asia (+6.2 points), Central and West Africa (+5.2 points), and East and South Africa (+4.5 points), primarily due to improvements in the Housing and Access to Information dimensions.

Figure 8
The Global Performance in the Context Sub-Index over the years
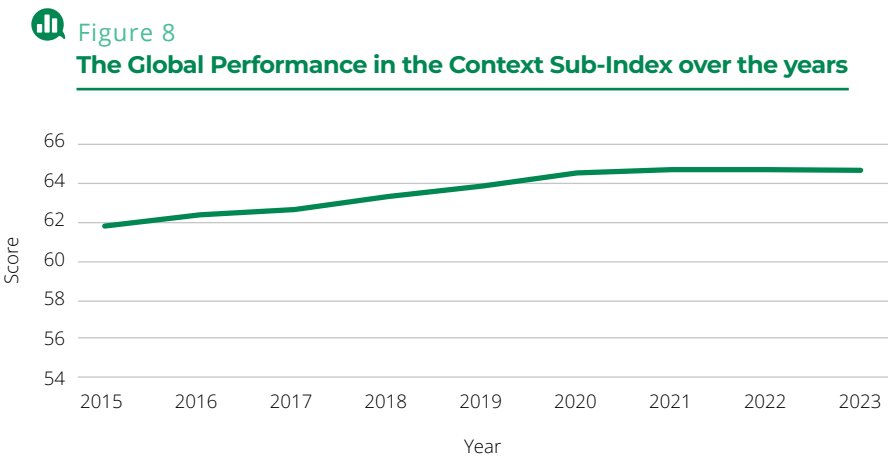
Figure 9
The performance of the Context Sub-Index dimensions in 2024 and 2015

DIMENSIONS OF THE CONTEXT SUB-INDEX	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2015	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2024	SCORE VARIATION
Environment	53.7	54.7	+1 ⬆
Housing	55.7	60	+4.3 ⬆
Conflicts and Wars	83	80.8	-2.2 ⬇
Democracy and Safety	57.3	55.4	-1.9 ⬇
Access to Information	63.4	76.8	+13.4 ⬆

Figure 10
The top 5 countries in the Context Sub-Index 2024 and 2015

COUNTRY	INDEX 2024 (157 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)		INDEX 2015 (163 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)	
	Rank	Score out of 100	Rank	Score out of 100
Iceland	1	92.6	1	90.7
Switzerland	2	90.1	3	88.5
Sweden	3	89.9	2	89.6
Norway	4	88.1	4	87.8
Denmark	5	87.4	6	86.4

Figure 11
The bottom 5 countries in the Context Sub-Index 2024 and 2015

COUNTRY	INDEX 2024 (157 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)		INDEX 2015 (163 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)	
	Rank	Score out of 100	Rank	Score out of 100
Ethiopia	153	36.7	158	32.4
DR Congo	154	33.1	159	29.2
Burundi	155	32.3	160	28.8
Chad	156	28.7	163	22.3
Central African Republic	157	24.6	162	23.1

Figure 12
**The geographic areas' scores in the Context Sub-Index 2024 and 2015**

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2015 OUT OF 100	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2024 OUT OF 100	TIER IN THE INDEX 2015	TIER IN THE INDEX 2024	SCORE VARIATION
West Europe and Other States	78.8	79.9	Strong HR implementation	Strong HR implementation	+1.1 ⬆
Latin America and Caribbean	65.6	67.7	Moderate HR implementation	Moderate HR implementation	+2.1 ⬆
East Asia and Pacific	64.6	67.6	Basic HR implementation	Moderate HR implementation	+3 ⬆
East Europe and Central Asia	65.2	65.3	Moderate HR implementation	Moderate HR implementation	+0.1 ⬆
South Asia	58.1	64.3	Basic HR implementation	Basic HR implementation	+6.2 ⬆
Middle East and North Africa	54.1	58.1	Limited HR implementation	Basic HR implementation	+4 ⬆
Central and West Africa	42.5	47.7	Minimal HR implementation	Limited HR implementation	+5.2 ⬆
East and South Africa	41.3	45.8	Minimal HR implementation	Limited HR implementation	+4.5 ⬆

Conversely, East Europe and Central Asia show virtually no growth (+0.1 points), with significant deterioration in the Conflicts and Wars and Democracy and Safety dimensions impacting the results.

When analyzed in more detail, we see that the deterioration in the Conflicts and Wars and Democracy and Safety dimensions begins in 2019 concurrently and worsens progressively (Figure 13)[5].

Improvements in the Housing and Access to Information dimensions are crucial for advancing the human rights of women and children.

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5 The values reported for the two dimensions reflect the scores (on a scale of 0 to 100) assigned to the areas in question, not the raw data. The Conflicts and Wars dimension is composed of the indicators "Global Peace Index" and "Refugees per country of origin," while the Democracy and Safety dimension includes the "Global Democracy Index" and "Intentional homicide rate."

Figure 13
The performance of the dimensions Conflicts and Wars and Democracy and Safety over the years
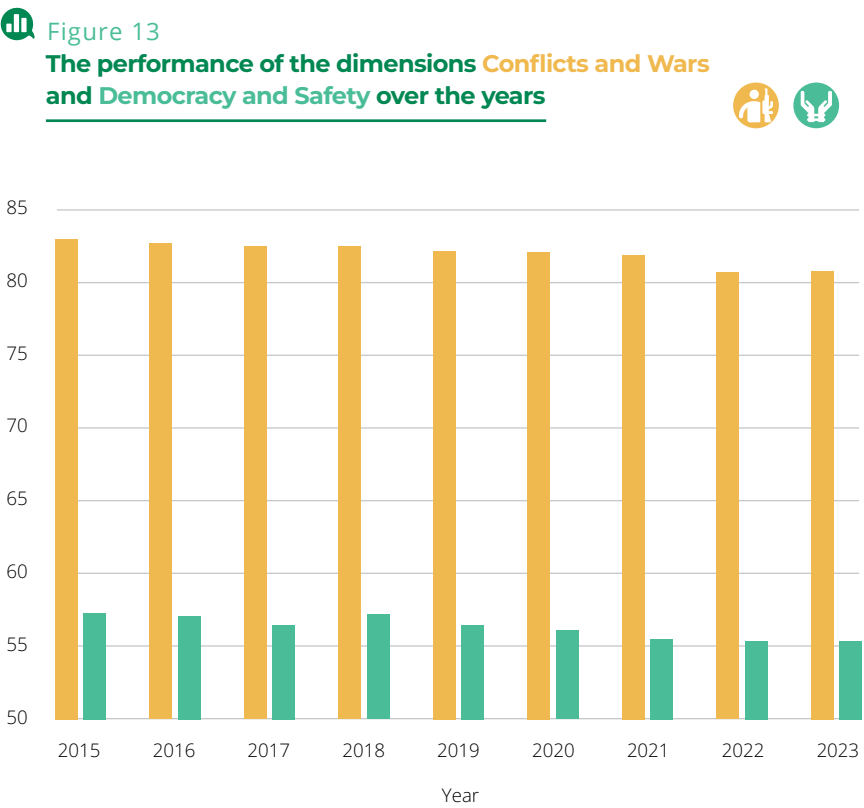
Figure 14

The correlation between the indicators 3 (People using safely managed drinking water sources) and 11 (Under-five mortality rate)

Correlation coefficient: $\rho_s = 0.861$

Indicator 11 (Under-five mortality rate) / Indicator 3 (People using safely managed drinking water sources)

- SOUTH ASIA
- EAST AND SOUTH AFRICA
- EAST EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA
- MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
- LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN
- WEST EUROPE AND OTHER STATES
- CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA
- EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC
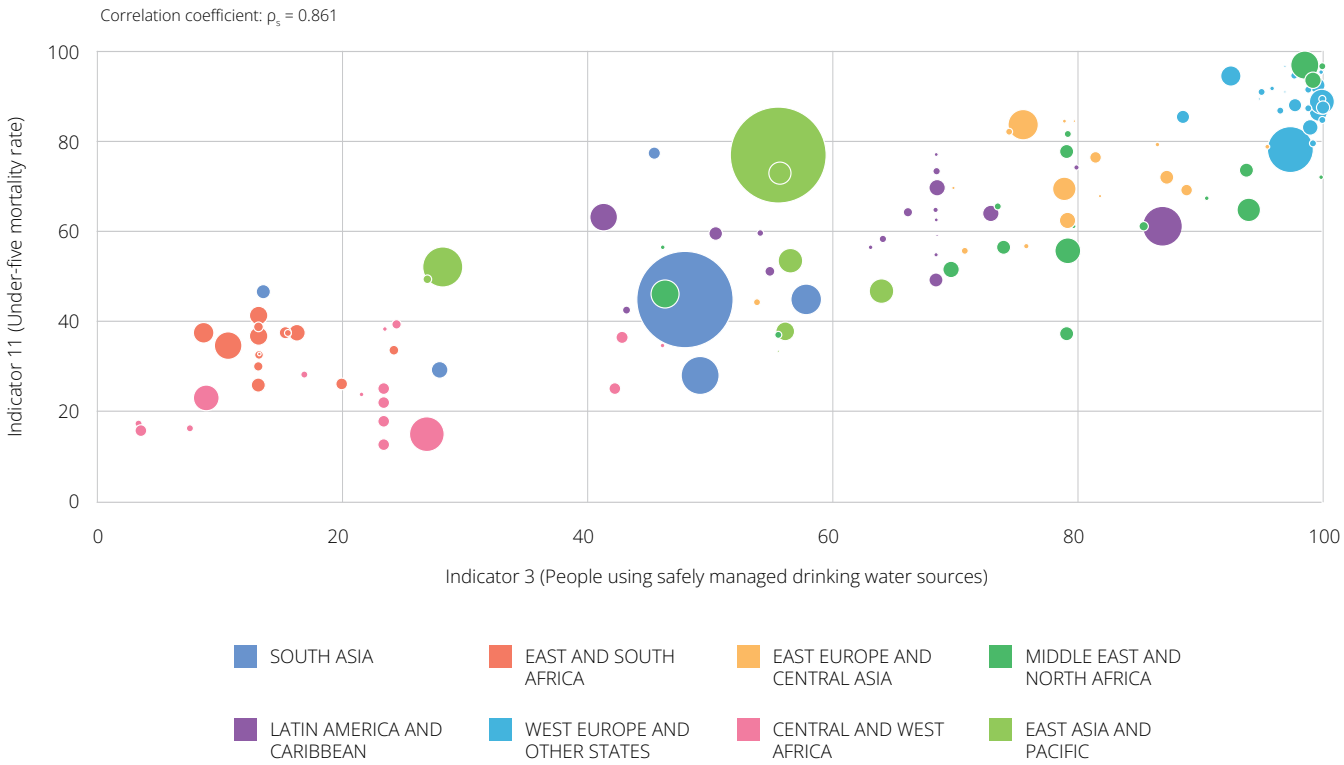
Figure 15

The correlation between indicators 9 (People with access to electricity) and 21 (Lifetime risk of maternal death)

Correlation coefficient: $\rho_s = 0.844$

Indicator 21 (Lifetime risk of maternal death) / Indicator 9 (People with access to electricity)

- SOUTH ASIA
- EAST AND SOUTH AFRICA
- EAST EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA
- MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
- LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN
- WEST EUROPE AND OTHER STATES
- CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA
- EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

Figure 16

The top 5 and bottom 5 countries in each dimension of the Context Sub-Index 2024

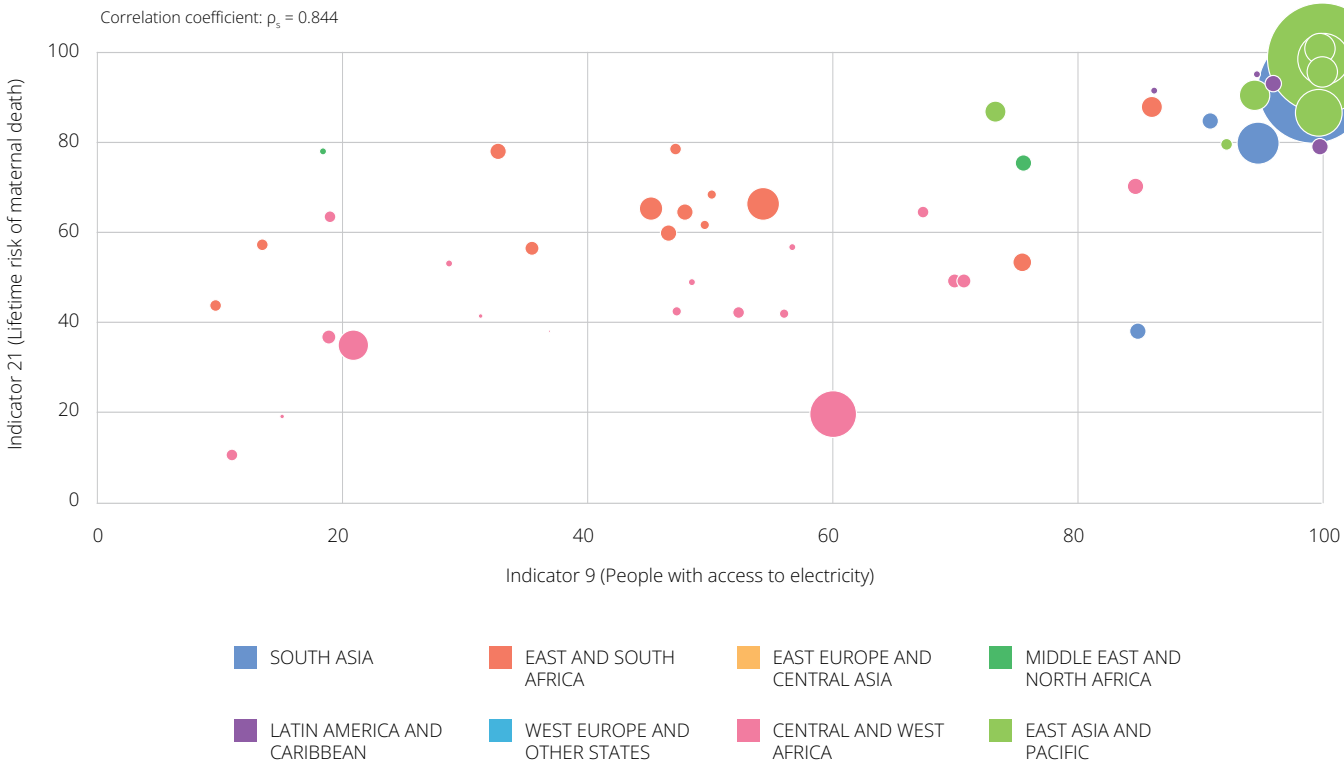| DIMENSIONS OF THE CONTEXT SUB-INDEX	COUNTRY	RANK	SCORE OUT OF 100	COUNTRY	RANK	SCORE OUT OF 100
Environment	DR Congo	1	98.6	Bahrain	153	18.5
	Central African Republic	2	98.2	Saudi Arabia	154	14.7
	Sierra Leone	3	96.8	United Arab Emirates	155	10.3
	Liberia	4	96.3	Kuwait	156	9.8
	Guinea-Bissau	5	94.5	Qatar	157	4.7
Housing	Kuwait	1	100.0	Togo	153	10.6
	Singapore	1	100.0	DR Congo	154	10.3
	Denmark	3	99.4	Ethiopia	155	8.2
	Austria	4	99.3	Central African Republic	156	7.6
	Republic of Korea	4	99.3	Chad	157	6.5
Conflicts and wars	Iceland	1	97.7	DR Congo	153	62.9
	Denmark	2	96.1	Myanmar	154	61.3
	Ireland	2	96.1	Central African Republic	155	38.7
	New Zealand	2	96.1	Ukraine	156	34.8
	Austria	5	96.0	Afghanistan	157	31.9
Democracy and Safety	Norway	1	94.2	Chad	153	29.2
	Iceland	2	93.0	Myanmar	154	29.1
	Ireland	3	91.8	Venezuela	155	29.1
	Switzerland	4	91.5	DR Congo	156	28.2
	Denmark	5	90.1	Central African Republic	157	24.2
Access to Information	Iceland	1	99.8	Burkina Faso	153	20.2
	United Arab Emirates	2	99.6	Malawi	154	18.9
	Kuwait	2	99.6	Chad	155	14.4
	Norway	4	99.5	Central African Republic	156	12.8
	Bahrain	5	99.3	Burundi	157	7.7

Specifically examining the first dimension, people with access to safely managed water sources, shows a correlation with under-five mortality rates (Figure 14)[6]. Water-borne diseases are the leading cause of under-five mortality (see WeWorld (2024), *Flowing Futures*[7]), so having access to clean and safe water helps prevent these diseases. While correlation does not imply causation, the patterns observed across different countries strongly suggest that higher levels of access to safely managed water sources are associated with better health outcomes for children.

Another correlation can be observed between access to electricity and the risk of maternal mortality in a given country (Figures 15)[8]. Access to electricity is known to significantly influence the increased risk of maternal mortality. In many settings, health facilities and hospitals continue to face challenges with electricity availability, posing risks to the health of pregnant women and newborns during childbirth.

Breaking down the overall Index into sub-indexes, which are further divided into dimensions, allows for a more specific analysis of certain aspects of women's and children's lives and related human rights. This approach reveals that some countries exhibit very positive or very negative performance across specific dimensions, which may not be prominently highlighted in the overall rankings (Figure 16).

....

6   These scores represent the countries' performance on these indicators rather than the raw data. Countries positioned further to the left in the graph distribution have very high under-five mortality rates and very low access to safely managed drinking water sources. Conversely, countries positioned further to the right have very high access to safely managed drinking water sources and very low under-five mortality rates.

7   The report is available here https://ejbn4fjvt9h.exactdn.com/uploads/2024/03/Flowing-Futures-web_compressed.pdf

8   The values displayed represent the scores (on a scale of 0 to 100) assigned to countries based on the indicators in question, rather than raw data. Countries positioned further to the left in the graph distribution typically exhibit higher risks of childbirth mortality and lower access to electricity. Conversely, countries positioned further to the right tend to have high access to electricity and low risks of childbirth mortality.

2.4 The Children's Sub-Index Global Map

- ✗ ChildFund Alliance members
- ✗ ChildFund Alliance countries of operations
- ⬜ Data not available

Advanced Human Rights Implementation
Equal or more than 85

Ranking			Score
1		Denmark	92.8
2		Netherlands	92.6
2	✗	Sweden	92.6
4		Switzerland	92.1
5		Norway	91.5
6		Slovenia	91.4
7		Portugal	90.8
8		Iceland	90.7
9	✗	France	90.5
10		Belgium	90.3
11		Luxembourg	90.1
12	✗	Australia	89.9
13		Finland	89.7
14		Ireland	89.6
15		Estonia	89.0
15	✗	South Korea	89.0
17		Cyprus	88.9
18	✗	Japan	88.6
19		Lithuania	88.4
20		Austria	88.0
21	✗	Latvia	87.8
22	✗	New Zealand	87.5
23		Czech Republic	87.4
24		Israel	87.3
25	✗	Italy	87.2
26		Singapore	86.7
27		Poland	86.1
28	✗	Germany	85.6
29		United Kingdom	85.0

Strong Human Rights Implementation
Between 75 and 84

Ranking			Score
30		Croatia	84.6
31	✗	Spain	84.4
32	✗	Canada	84.3
32		Malta	84.3
34		Hungary	83.9
34		Russia	83.9
36		Greece	83.3
37		Slovakia	81.1
38	✗	United States	81.0
39		Montenegro	79.9
40	✗	Chile	79.7
41		Kazakhstan	79.0
42		Belarus	78.7
43		China	78.5
44		Moldova	77.1
45		Uruguay	77.0
46	✗	Argentina	76.8
47	✗	Mexico	76.1
48	✗	Turkey	76.0
49		Cuba	75.1
50	✗	Mongolia	75.0

Moderate Human Rights Implementation
Between 65 and 74

Ranking			Score
51		Serbia	74.8
52		Bulgaria	74.7
52		Maldives	74.7
54		Uzbekistan	74.4
55		Mauritius	74.1
56	✗	Thailand	73.6
57		United Arab Emirates	72.8
58	✗	Tunisia	72.7
59		Bosnia and Herzegovina	72.2
60		Albania	72.1
60		Iran	72.1
62		Malaysia	71.8
63		Romania	71.6
63	✗	Vietnam	71.6
65	✗	Georgia	71.3
65		Saudi Arabia	71.3
67		Kyrgyz Republic	70.9
68		Costa Rica	70.6
69		Algeria	70.3
70		Macedonia	70.1
70	✗	Ukraine	70.1
72		Bahrain	69.7
73	✗	Brazil	69.5
74	✗	Fiji	69.3
75		Panama	68.9
76	✗	Bolivia	68.5
77	✗	Peru	67.2
78		Trinidad and Tobago	67.1
79	✗	Ecuador	66.9
80		Kuwait	66.8
81		Azerbaijan	65.9
82	✗	Sri Lanka	65.6
83	✗	Indonesia	65.2
84		Jamaica	65.1

Basic Human Rights Implementation
Between 55 and 64

Ranking			Score
85		Qatar	64.9
86		Bhutan	64.2
87	✗	India	64.0
88		Oman	63.4
89	✗	Armenia	63.0
90		Tajikistan	62.9
91		Colombia	62.8
92		Dominican Republic	62.5
93		Egypt	62.4
94	✗	Morocco	62.1
95		Cabo Verde	61.8
96	✗	Philippines	60.7
97	✗	El Salvador	60.6
98		Namibia	60.2
99		Guyana	60.1
100	✗	Paraguay	58.7
101		Belize	58.6
102	✗	Nicaragua	58.5
102	✗	Palestine	58.5
104	✗	Honduras	55.3
104		Suriname	55.3

Limited Human Rights Implementation
Between 45 and 54

Ranking			Score
106	✗	Bangladesh	54.9
107		Togo	54.7
108		Jordan	54.5
109	✗	Cambodia	54.3
110	✗	Lebanon	54.0
111	✗	Myanmar	53.6
112		Vanuatu	53.5
113	✗	Nepal	53.1
114		Venezuela	52.5
115	✗	South Africa	52.4
116	✗	Guatemala	50.5
117	✗	Timor-Leste	49.6
118		Botswana	49.1
118	✗	Ghana	49.1
120	✗	Kenya	48.7
120		Papua New Guinea	48.7
122		Cote d'Ivoire	46.6
123	✗	Laos	46.4
124	✗	Rwanda	46.0
125	✗	Burundi	45.8
126	✗	Senegal	45.6
127	✗	Mozambique	45.5
128		Comoros	45.2
129		Eswatini	45.0

Minimal Human Rights Implementation
Equal or less than 45

Ranking			Score
130	✗	Sierra Leone	43.5
131	✗	Madagascar	43
132	✗	Afghanistan	42.9
133	✗	Benin	42.1
134	✗	Tanzania	41.9
135	✗	Ethiopia	41.6
136	✗	Zambia	41.5
136		Zimbabwe	41.5
138		Guinea-Bissau	41.4
139		Cameroon	41.3
139	✗	Malawi	41.3
141		Pakistan	41
142	✗	Gambia	40.4
143		Nigeria	40.3
144		Yemen	39.8
145	✗	Uganda	38.4
146		Mauritania	37.8
147		Djibouti	37.7
148		Lesotho	37.5
149	✗	Burkina Faso	36.7
150	✗	DR Congo	35.8
151		Angola	35.1
152	✗	Guinea	32.2
153		Liberia	31.7
154	✗	Mali	31.3
155	✗	Niger	30.9
156		Central African Republic	30.6
157		Chad	30.1

In 2024, the global average of the Children's Sub-Index is 63.5; in 2015, it was 60.7 (Figure 17). However, the trend shows stagnation from 2021 and a slight deterioration from 2022, with variations among regions.

The Children's Education dimension shows almost no growth (+0.1 points), experiencing setbacks since 2020 due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions in school activities (Figure 18). However, the other dimensions demonstrate significant improvements. Particularly noteworthy is the growth in Children's Health (indicators 11. Under-five Mortality Rate and 12. Adolescent Mortality Rate), which increased by 4.2 points. Additionally, Children's Human Capital (indicators 15. People Covered by at Least One Social Protection Benefit and 16. Government Expenditure on Education) saw an increase of 4 points compared to 2015.

Once again, the top positions in the Children's Sub-Index rankings are dominated by northern European and continental European countries, which report higher scores compared to both the Overall Index and the Context Sub-Index (Figure 19). The countries that ranked lowest in terms of the implementation of children's human rights are all located in Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 20).

All geographic areas experienced growth (Figures 21). Areas starting from lower levels of human rights implementation, such as Central and West Africa (+4.7 points), experienced significant improvements in the Children's Health and Education dimensions. In the Middle East and North Africa (+4.1 points), the most notable improvements can be seen in the Children's Education and Children's Human Capital dimensions. South Asia shows the largest increase of all regions (+5.9 points), with consistent improvements in Children's Health and Children's Human Capital.

Figure 17
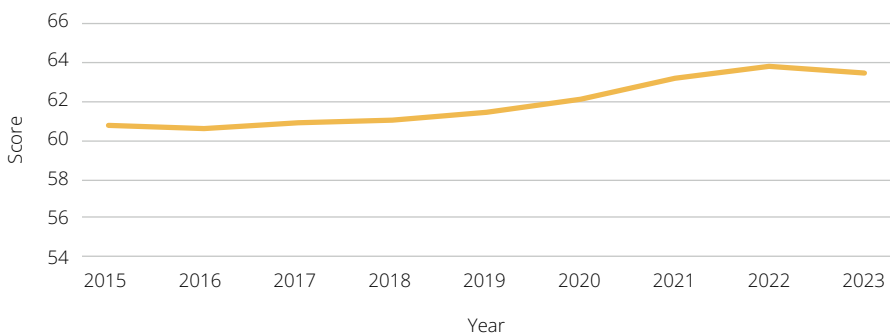**The Global Performance in the Children Sub-Index over the years**

Figure 18
The performance of the Children Sub-Index dimensions in 2024 and 2015

DIMENSIONS OF THE CHILDREN SUB-INDEX	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2015	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2024	SCORE VARIATION
Children's Health	53.5	57.7	+4.2 ⬆
Children's Education	74.8	74.9	+0.1 ⬆
Children's Human Capital	55.2	59.2	+4 ⬆
Children's Economic Capital	66.6	68.9	+2.3 ⬆
Violence against Children	56.1	58.8	+2.7 ⬆

Figure 19
The top 5 countries in the Children Sub-Index 2024 and 2015

COUNTRY	INDEX 2024 (157 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)		INDEX 2015 (163 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)	
	Rank	Score out of 100	Rank	Score out of 100
Denmark	1	92.8	4	91.2
Netherlands	2	92.6	2	92
Sweden	2	92.6	2	92
Switzerland	4	92.1	6	90.8
Norway	5	91.5	1	93.1

Figure 20
The bottom 5 countries in the Children Sub-Index 2024 and 2015

COUNTRY	INDEX 2024 (157 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)		INDEX 2015 (163 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)	
	Rank	Score out of 100	Rank	Score out of 100
Liberia	153	31.7	151	34.3
Mali	154	31.3	159	29.2
Chad	155	30.9	160	29.1
Niger	156	30.6	162	26.9
Central African Republic	157	30.1	161	27.1

Figure 21
The geographic areas' scores in the Children Sub-Index 2024 and 2015

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2015 OUT OF 100	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2024 OUT OF 100	TIER IN THE INDEX 2015	TIER IN THE INDEX 2024	SCORE VARIATION
West Europe and Other States	84.2	84.8	Strong HR implementation	Strong HR implementation	+0.6 ⬆
East Europe and Central Asia	74.2	76.1	Moderate HR implementation	Strong HR implementation	+1.9 ⬆
East Asia and Pacific	71.8	74.4	Basic HR implementation	Moderate HR implementation	+2.6 ⬆
Latin America and Caribbean	65.1	68.1	Basic HR implementation	Moderate HR implementation	+3 ⬆
Middle East and North Africa	55.6	59.7	Basic HR implementation	Basic HR implementation	+4.1 ⬆
South Asia	52.8	58.7	Limited HR implementation	Basic HR implementation	+5.9 ⬆
East and South Africa	42.2	42.8	Minimal HR implementation	Minimal HR implementation	+0.6 ⬆
Central and West Africa	34.4	39.1	Minimal HR implementation	Minimal HR implementation	+4.7 ⬆

Figure 22
The top 5 and bottom 5 countries in each dimension of the Children Sub-Index 2024

DIMENSIONS OF THE CONTEXT SUB-INDEX	COUNTRY	RANK	SCORE OUT OF 100	COUNTRY	RANK	SCORE OUT OF 100
Children's Health	Slovenia	1	96.7	Niger	153	27.6
	Singapore	2	95.9	Guinea	154	26.3
	Italy	3	95.6	DR Congo	155	25.2
	Luxembourg	4	95.3	Chad	156	23.4
	Spain	5	95.2	Sierra Leone	157	22.0
Children's Education	Sweden	1	96.3	Mali	153	39.3
	Norway	2	95.9	Burkina Faso	154	38.2
	Ireland	3	95.3	Mauritania	155	38.0
	Iceland	3	95.3	Central African Republic	156	35.9
	Netherlands	5	95.0	Chad	157	30.0
Children's Human Capital	Sweden	1	92.0	Myanmar	153	25.2
	Israel	2	91.5	Papua New Guinea	154	24.7
	Belgium	3	90.7	Laos	155	23.9
	Denmark	4	89.9	Central African Republic	156	23.6
	Finland	5	89.2	Guinea	157	22.8
Children's Economic Capital	Czech Republic	1	96.4	Botswana	153	37.0
	United Arab Emirates	2	96.0	Lesotho	154	36.8
	Germany	3	95.8	South Africa	155	31.8
	South Korea	3	95.8	Eswatini	156	30.5
	Poland	3	95.8	Djibouti	157	25.9
Violence Against Children	Japan	1	96.9	Burkina Faso	153	22.8
	Switzerland	2	95.2	Liberia	154	20.9
	Netherlands	2	95.2	Chad	154	20.9
	Cyprus	4	93.0	Mali	156	12.8
	Portugal	5	92.7	Niger	157	11.0

However, in East and South Africa, the situation remains largely stagnant, with a deterioration in the dimensions of Children's Human Capital and Economic Capital.

When examining the rankings of individual dimensions within the Children's Sub-Index, greater heterogeneity is observed among the top five countries compared to the overall rankings. Countries such as Slovenia, Czech Republic, and Japan stand out in these dimensions. Conversely, the lowest positions are consistently occupied by countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a few from South Asia also included (Figure 22).

2.5
The Women's Sub-Index Global Map

✦ ChildFund Alliance members

✦ ChildFund Alliance countries of operations

Data not available

Advanced Human Rights Implementation
Equal or more than 85

Ranking			Score
1	✦	Sweden	90.9
2	✦	Australia	90.4
3		Iceland	89.1
4		Norway	89.0
5		Estonia	88.7
6		Finland	88.6
7	✦	Canada	88.2
7		Slovenia	88.2
9	✦	Spain	87.6
10		Belgium	87.2
11		United Kingdom	87.1
12	✦	United States	86.8
13		Netherlands	85.9
14		Singapore	85.8
15		Denmark	85.6
16		Lithuania	85.5
17	✦	France	85.0
17		Ireland	85.0

Strong Human Rights Implementation
Between 75 and 84

Ranking			Score
19	✦	New Zealand	84.9
20		Switzerland	84.8
21	✦	Latvia	84.6
22		Austria	84.5
23	✦	Germany	84.4
24		Poland	84.3
25		Portugal	82.3
26		Malta	81.0
27	✦	Chile	80.8
28		Cyprus	80.6
29		Serbia	80.5
30		Bulgaria	80.3
30		Croatia	80.3
32		Israel	79.9
33	✦	South Korea	79.2
34		Slovakia	78.8
35		Luxembourg	77.5
36		Belarus	77.4
37		Greece	76.9
38		Albania	76.4
38		Hungary	76.4
40	✦	Italy	76.1
41	✦	Ukraine	76.0
42	✦	Georgia	75.8
43		Czech Republic	75.5
44		United Arab Emirates	75.4

Moderate Human Rights Implementation
Between 65 and 74

Ranking			Score
45	✦	Argentina	74.8
46		Kazakhstan	74.3
47		Bahrain	73.9
48		Qatar	73.7
49		Montenegro	73.5
50	✦	Brazil	73.4
51	✦	Mongolia	73.1
52		Cuba	73.0
53		Russia	72.8
54		Moldova	72.7
55	✦	Armenia	72.6
56		Costa Rica	72.3
56		Macedonia	72.3
56		Panama	72.3
56		Uruguay	72.3
60		Trinidad and Tobago	72.2
61	✦	Peru	71.6
61		Romania	71.6
63		Kyrgyz Republic	70.3
64		Bosnia and Herzegovina	69.5
64		Japan	69.5
66		Colombia	69.1
67	✦	Paraguay	68.4
68		Guyana	68.2
69		Malaysia	68.0
70		Dominican Republic	67.9
71		Uzbekistan	67.4
72		Tajikistan	67.2
73		Venezuela	66.4
74	✦	Ecuador	66.1
74	✦	Mexico	66.1
76		Oman	66.0
77	✦	Philippines	65.0

Basic Human Rights Implementation
Between 55 and 64

Ranking			Score
78		Mauritius	64.9
79		Jordan	64.1
80	✦	Thailand	63.7
81		Kuwait	63.6
82		Azerbaijan	63.3
83		China	62.8
84		Jamaica	62.4
85	✦	Turkey	62.2
86		Maldives	62.0
87	✦	El Salvador	61.7
88	✦	Tunisia	61.2
89	✦	South Africa	59.9
90		Belize	59.8
91	✦	Nicaragua	59.1
92	✦	Palestine	58.9
93	✦	Vietnam	58.2
94		Botswana	58.0
94	✦	Indonesia	58.0
96	✦	Fiji	57.9
97		Saudi Arabia	57.7
98	✦	Egypt	57.1
99		Algeria	57.0
99	✦	Honduras	57.0
101	✦	Bolivia	56.8
102		Cabo Verde	56.7
103		Suriname	56.4
104	✦	Timor-Leste	56.3
105		Namibia	55.6
106	✦	Lebanon	55.3

Limited Human Rights Implementation
Between 45 and 54

Ranking			Score
107	✦	Morocco	54.2
108		Vanuatu	54.1
109		Iran	52.9
110	✦	Myanmar	52.5
111		Zimbabwe	51.8
112	✦	Kenya	51.6
113		Bhutan	51.1
114	✦	Sri Lanka	50.0
115	✦	Guatemala	48.0
116		Djibouti	47.4
116	✦	Laos	47.4
118	✦	Ghana	46.8
119		Eswatini	45.4

Minimal Human Rights Implementation
Equal or less than 45

| Ranking			Score
120	✦	Zambia	44.6
121	✦	Cambodia	44.2
122		Nigeria	43.8
123	✦	Gambia	43.1
123	✦	Uganda	43.1
125	✦	Papua New Guinea	42.9
126	✦	Bangladesh	41.6
127	✦	India	40.5
127	✦	Rwanda	40.5
129		Comoros	40.3
130		Cameroon	40.2
131	✦	Mozambique	39.8
132		Angola	39.7
133		Togo	39.6
134	✦	Guinea	39.5
135		Liberia	38.7
136		Lesotho	38.5
137	✦	Senegal	38.4
138	✦	DR Congo	37.8
139	✦	Nepal	37
140		Guinea-Bissau	36
140	✦	Madagascar	36
142	✦	Malawi	35.4
143		Cote d'Ivoire	35.2
144	✦	Ethiopia	34.7
145	✦	Burkina Faso	34.6
146	✦	Sierra Leone	34.1
147		Pakistan	33.5
148	✦	Burundi	33.1
149	✦	Tanzania	32.2
150	✦	Benin	31.7
151		Mauritania	29.9
152	✦	Mali	27.8
153		Central African Republic	27.2
154		Yemen	26.4
155	✦	Niger	24.4
156		Chad	22.1
157	✦	Afghanistan	20.3

In 2024, the global average of the Women's Sub-Index is 58.1; in 2015, it was 55.5. While there has been improvement in the performance of this sub-index in recent years, there has been stagnation since 2022. Additionally, it remains the worst performing sub-index among the three (Figure 23). **It seems women continue to represent the group in most vulnerable and marginalized conditions across all regions of the world.**

All dimensions comprising the Women's Sub-Index have shown improvement, although with varying degrees (Figure 24). The most significant growth is observed in the Women's Education dimension (+6.2 points), which includes indicators such as Female Education Attainment in Upper Secondary and Tertiary School Enrollment (indicators 23 and 24). There is also a noteworthy improvement in the Women's Decision-making Participation dimension (+2 points). However, this dimension tends to be more volatile due to its indicators (27. Women in Ministerial Level Positions and 28. Women in Senior and Middle Management Positions), yet it serves as a critical benchmark for gender equality in political and economic processes.

Once again, the top-ranked countries in the Women's Sub-Index include Northern European countries, along with Australia and Estonia (Figure 25).

The countries ranking at the bottom are mostly from Sub-Saharan Africa, with Yemen and Afghanistan also notable in the bottom rankings (Figure 26).

Figure 23
The Global Performance in the three Sub-Indexes over the years

Women's Sub-Index Children's Sub-Index Context Sub-Index
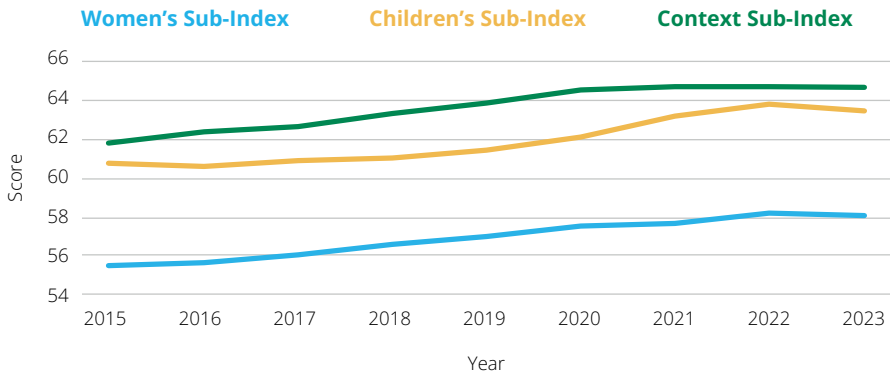
Figure 24
The performance of the Women's Sub-Index dimensions in 2024 and 2015

DIMENSIONS OF THE WOMEN'S SUB-INDEX	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2015	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2024	SCORE VARIATION
Women's Health	74.7	75.2	+0.5 ⬆
Women's Education	39.5	45.7	+6.2 ⬆
Women's Economic Opportunities	55.4	57	+1.6 ⬆
Women's Decision-making Participation	52.4	54.4	+2 ⬆
Violence against Women	61.4	62.2	+0.8 ⬆

Figure 25
The top 5 countries in the Women's Sub-Index 2024 and 2015

COUNTRY	INDEX 2024 (157 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)		INDEX 2015 (163 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)	
	Rank	Score out of 100	Rank	Score out of 100
Sweden	1	90.9	5	86.9
Australia	2	90.4	8	83.8
Iceland	3	89.1	1	89.9
Norway	4	89	2	88.3
Estonia	5	88.7	7	85.2

Figure 26
The bottom 5 countries in the Women's Sub-Index 2024 and 2015

COUNTRY	INDEX 2024 (157 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)		INDEX 2015 (163 COUNTRIES CONSIDERED)	
	Rank	Score out of 100	Rank	Score out of 100
Central African Republic	153	27.2	161	21.2
Yemen	154	26.4	158	27.2
Niger	155	24.4	159	23.2
Chad	156	22.1	162	20.3
Afghanistan	157	20.3	163	19.5

Figure 27
Afghanistan's performance in each dimension of the Women's Sub-Index 2024 and 2015

DIMENSIONS OF THE WOMEN'S SUB-INDEX	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2015	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2024
Women's Health	37.3	44.9
Women's Education	3.51	5.74
Women's Economic Opportunities	12.6	12.4
Women's Decision-Making Participation	28.1	22.8
Violence against Women	60.5	47.2

Afghanistan stands out as the country where women's human rights are least guaranteed overall, especially when it comes to their education and economic opportunities (Figure 27).

In terms of geographic areas, there is generally higher progress for regions that appeared stagnant in other sub-indexes (such as Western Europe and Other States or Eastern Europe and Central Asia), even though their start and end values remain lower compared to other sub-indexes (Figure 28).

The region with the lowest overall score (39.5 out of 100) and minimal progress since 2015 is South Asia, where there has been a consistent deterioration in the Women's Decision-Making Participation dimension. Conversely, the most significant improvement is observed in the Middle East and North Africa (+5.4 points), driven by advancements in Women's Decision-Making Participation, Women's Education, and Violence against Women dimensions. Sub-Saharan African countries have also shown improvement since 2015, but their scores still rank them among the worst in terms of human rights implementation for women.
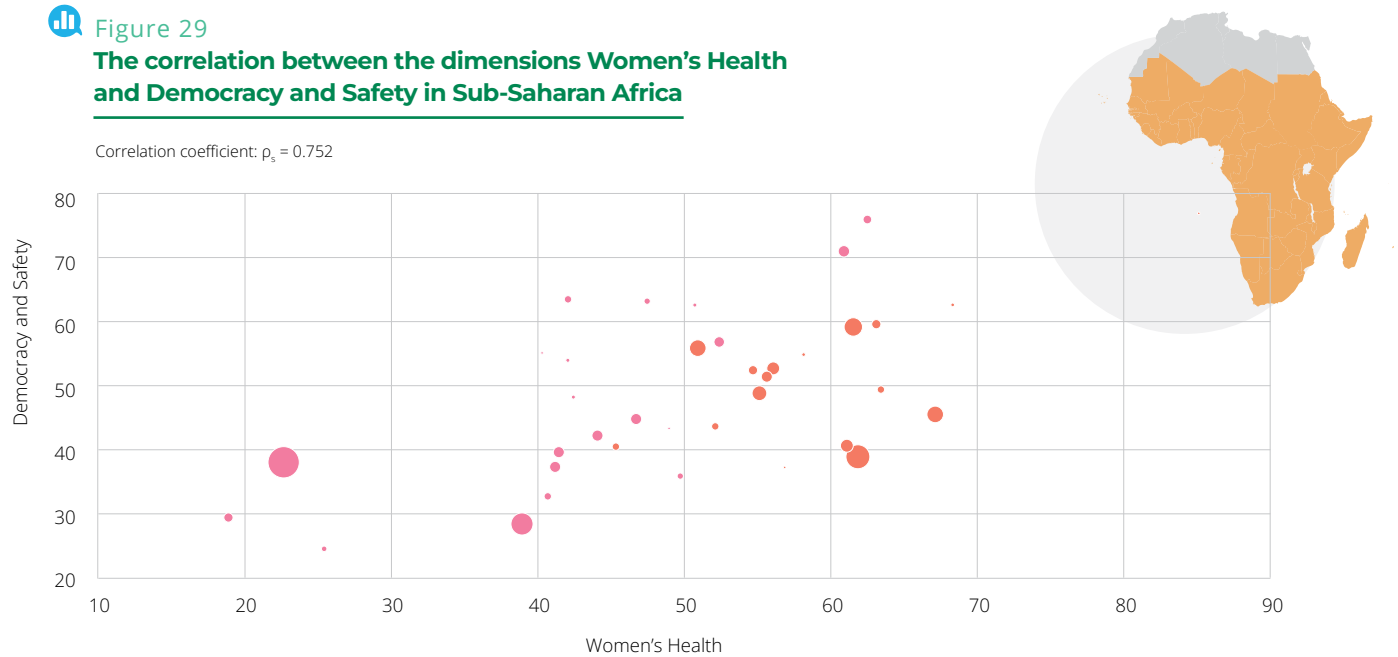
Figure 28
The geographic areas' scores in the Women's Sub-Index 2024 and 2015

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2015 OUT OF 100	SCORE IN THE INDEX 2024 OUT OF 100	TIER IN THE INDEX 2015	TIER IN THE INDEX 2024	SCORE VARIATION
West Europe and Other States	82.8	85.5	Strong HR implementation	Advanced HR implementation	+2.7 ⬆
East Europe and Central Asia	68.8	71.4	Moderate HR implementation	Moderate HR implementation	+2.6 ⬆
Latin America and Caribbean	64.6	69.8	Basic HR implementation	Moderate HR implementation	+5.2 ⬆
East Asia and Pacific	59.8	63.2	Basic HR implementation	Basic HR implementation	+3.4 ⬆
Middle East and North Africa	50.2	55.6	Limited HR implementation	Basic HR implementation	+5.4 ⬆
East and South Africa	38.8	42.8	Minimal HR implementation	Minimal HR implementation	+4 ⬆
Central and West Africa	37.6	41.8	Minimal HR implementation	Minimal HR implementation	+4.2 ⬆
South Asia	39.2	39.5	Minimal HR implementation	Minimal HR implementation	+0.3 ⬆

Figure 29
The correlation between the dimensions Women's Health and Democracy and Safety in Sub-Saharan Africa

Correlation coefficient: ρ_s = 0.752

It is particularly noteworthy to observe the correlation between political instability in Sub-Saharan African countries and women's rights, particularly their health (Figure 29)[9]. Many countries in this region with lower levels of democracy and safety

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9 The values reported for the two dimensions reflect the scores (on a scale of 0 to 100) assigned to the respective areas, not the raw data. The Democracy and Safety dimension comprises the indicators "Global Democracy Index" and "Intentional homicide rate," while the Women's Health dimension includes "Lifetime risk of maternal death" and "Life expectancy at birth." Countries positioned further to the left in the graph distribution have low values for both dimensions. Conversely, countries positioned further to the right have very high values.

face significant challenges in women's health, including high maternal mortality rates, limited access to healthcare, and widespread gender-based violence. While correlation does not imply causation, the patterns observed across different countries strongly suggest that higher levels of democracy and safety can be associated with better health outcomes for women. Policies that promote democratic governance and improve security can have a profound impact on improving women's health worldwide.

Similar to the other sub-indexes, examining the rankings of individual dimensions within the Women's Sub-Index highlights countries with particularly positive or negative performances that may not be evident in the overall rankings (Figure 30).

Figure 30
The top 5 and bottom 5 countries in each dimension of the Women's Sub-Index 2024

DIMENSIONS OF THE WOMEN'S SUB-INDEX	COUNTRY	RANK	SCORE OUT OF 100	COUNTRY	RANK	SCORE OUT OF 100
Women's Health	Spain	1	97.0	Guinea-Bissau	153	40.2
	South Korea	2	96.6	DR Congo	154	38.9
	Australia	3	96.3	Central African Republic	155	25.3
	Switzerland	3	96.3	Nigeria	156	22.5
	Luxembourg	5	96.2	Chad	157	18.8
Women's Education	Latvia	1	94.6	Mauritania	153	3.5
	United States	2	93.3	Tanzania	154	3.2
	Sweden	3	92.3	Mali	155	3.1
	Slovenia	4	91.6	Niger	156	2.1
	Finland	5	91.3	Chad	156	2.1
Women's Economic Opportunities	Norway	1	93.2	Yemen	153	30.5
	Sweden	2	92.2	India	154	29.9
	Denmark	3	91.3	Nepal	155	29.0
	Finland	4	90.8	Pakistan	156	24.9
	Iceland	5	90.4	Afghanistan	157	12.4
Women's Decision-Making Participation	Costa Rica	1	94.8	Sri Lanka	153	23.9
	Nicaragua	2	92	Afghanistan	154	22.8
	Colombia	3	91.8	Saudi Arabia	155	19.0
	Sweden	4	90.9	Papua New Guinea	156	17.0
	Latvia	5	90.7	Yemen	157	3.4
Violence against Women	Luxembourg	1	97.1	Angola	153	41.9
	Malta	2	94.0	Ethiopia	154	41.2
	Singapore	3	93.4	Namibia	155	41.0
	Australia	4	92.6	Uganda	156	39.9
	Poland	5	92.4	Central African Republic	157	32.2

2.6
What Can We Draw from the ChildFund Alliance World Index 2024?

The ChildFund Alliance Word Index on the Rights of Women and Children offers valuable insights into the global status of women's and children's human rights. While progress has been made in certain areas, significant challenges remain, particularly for women. Based on the report's findings, below we list specific conclusions and recommendations to enhance living conditions and human rights for women and children.

GEOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES IN WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PERSIST

The ranking highlights significant geographic disparities, with Northern and Western European countries (e.g., Sweden, Iceland, and Norway) consistently ranking highest in terms of women's and children's rights. Conversely, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and conflict-affected countries, such as Afghanistan, Chad, and the Central African Republic, have the lowest scores. These countries face significant challenges, including political instability, lack of basic services, and entrenched gender inequality.

▶ *Governments, international agencies, and NGOs must focus development efforts on regions where the rights of women and children are being violated the most. Tailored interventions that address the root causes of inequality—such as poverty, lack of education, and patriarchal social norms—are crucial. Programs should also promote women's and children's leadership in these regions to foster inclusive solutions.*

SLOW PROGRESS TOWARDS FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

At the current pace, the full implementation of human rights for women and children will take 113 years, indicating that global efforts need to be significantly ramped up. This slow progress is especially problematic in contexts where external factors such as wars, conflicts, economic crises and climate change further hinder improvements.

▶ *Governments and international organizations must accelerate efforts by increasing investments in key sectors such as education, healthcare, and women's empowerment towards fully implementing women's and children's rights. Developing long-term strategic plans that integrate gender equality and children's rights into national policy frameworks will help ensure sustained progress.*

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN CONFLICT ZONES ARE AT JEOPARDY

The report makes clear that the rights of women and children are most at risk in conflict zones. Women, in particular, face heightened risks of gender-based violence in conflict settings, including rape as a weapon of war. Children in these areas suffer from loss of education, malnutrition, and exposure to violence.

▶ *International efforts should focus on conflict resolution and peacebuilding in areas where human rights violations are most severe. Women's and children's participation in peace processes is crucial to create lasting solutions. Additionally, international humanitarian law must be enforced, and perpetrators of gender-based violence in conflict must be held accountable. Child protection and support programs should be a priority of post-conflict reconstruction efforts, ensuring access to education, healthcare, and psychosocial support.*

WE MUST DO MORE TO PROTECT WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE

The index shows that despite progress in health and education, violence against women and children remains a significant issue globally, with countries still struggling to protect these vulnerable groups from abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

▶ *Countries should adopt stronger legal frameworks and policies aimed at preventing and responding to violence against women and children. This includes implementing national action plans that involve law enforcement, health services, and social workers to ensure that victims have access to justice, protection, and rehabilitation.*

CHILDREN ARE EXPERIENCING A STAGNATION IN THEIR EDUCATION

The Children's Education dimension has shown minimal progress, with improvements stagnating in recent years. This stagnation presents a serious risk to the long-term well-being of children, as education is directly linked to economic opportunities and empowerment.

▶ *Governments should prioritize the strengthening of educational systems by investing in innovative learning solutions, improving educational infrastructure, and ensuring that schools are accessible and safe for all children, especially for girls, children with disabilities and those in rural areas.*

WOMEN ARE EXPERIENCING PERSISTENT GENDER GAPS IN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITES

The report shows that despite improvements in education and political participation for women, there remain significant gender gaps in economic opportunities, including wage disparities and limited access to employment. This economic inequality exacerbates women's vulnerability, particularly in regions with weak governance and economic structures.

▶ *Governments must implement policies to close the gender wage gap, ensure equal pay for equal work, and remove barriers to women's access to employment. Additionally, programs that enhance women's financial literacy, increase their access to credit, and support female entrepreneurship are critical. Expanding women's involvement in decision-making within the economy, through quotas or incentives, can also have long-term benefits in promoting gender equality.*

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP IS CHALLENGED BY PATRIARCHAL NORMS

The report shows notable improvements in women's participation in decision-making processes in some countries, particularly in Europe and parts of Latin America. However, in many parts of the world, particularly in patriarchal societies, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions at all levels of government and business.

▶ *Governments should adopt affirmative action policies, such as gender quotas, to ensure women are adequately represented in leadership roles in politics, public administration, and the corporate sector. International organizations can support these efforts by providing training and leadership programs for women. Additionally, societal norms that limit women's roles in leadership must be challenged through public awareness campaigns and reforms to discriminatory laws and practices.*

WOMEN ARE AT RISK OF INCREASED VULNERABILITY DURING GLOBAL CRISES

The report also highlights that global crises, such as pandemics and economic recessions, disproportionately affect women, particularly in terms of economic security and health. Women are more likely to lose their jobs during economic downturns and have increased caregiving responsibilities, which limit their ability to participate in the workforce.

▶ *Governments should integrate gender-sensitive and gender-transformative policies into their emergency response frameworks. For example, during pandemics or other crises, social protection measures such as direct cash transfers and unemployment benefits should specifically target women. Post-crisis recovery efforts should also prioritize sectors where women are predominantly employed.*

WE MUST WORK TOWARDS CHILDREN AND WOMEN-CENTERED POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The report underscores the need for more evidence-based and data-driven approaches to policymaking that consider the specific needs of both women and children. Currently, many policies remain general, lacking the specificity needed to address the unique challenges women and children face in different contexts.

▶ *Governments should use available data from tools such as the ChildFund Alliance World Index to tailor policies that address the specific needs of women and children in their countries. Furthermore, child participation should be encouraged in policymaking processes, ensuring that children's voices are heard in decisions affecting their futures. Similarly, women must be involved in the development and implementation of policies that directly impact their lives, such as healthcare, employment, and social protection programs.*

The ChildFund Alliance World Index on Women's and Children's Rights 2024 reveals both encouraging progress and significant challenges in the global implementation of human rights for women and children. To accelerate progress, governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society must prioritize gender equality, focus on women's and children's empowerment, and adopt specific, context-based recommendations. By addressing the economic, social, and political barriers facing women and children, we can create a world where their rights are fully respected, protected, and realized.

The Global Ranking Dashboard

The recommendations outlined above have global relevance. However, it is important to remember that different countries can face significant internal diversity. This is why adopting a context-specific approach is essential.

To support this, ChildFund Alliance has created an online version of its global ranking. This open-source tool allows readers to explore global and regional rankings for the World Index and its three Sub-indexes (Context, Children's, and Women's), while tracking progress since 2015. The dashboard also includes country-specific scorecards, offering detailed insights across various dimensions and indicators. It is a useful tool for developing more context-specific recommendations.

SCAN THE QR CODE and discover more!

CHAPTER 3

Focus. Children's Voices on Their Right to the Future

3.1
Securing Tomorrow: The Right to the Future for Children and Youth in a Changing World

The past few decades have been marked by a series of crises, from the COVID-19 pandemic and escalating extreme weather events (EWEs) to the outbreak of new armed conflicts alongside enduring ones, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine and renewed hostilities in the Middle East. These crises have triggered significant population movement and have been accompanied by the rise of authoritarian regimes and the erosion of civil and social rights in many countries.

The global situation we face today is one of persistent, protracted, and multifaceted crises. These challenges span various fronts—environmental, economic, social, and educational—yet, we have not agreed on common solutions on a global scale. In this context, people living in most vulnerable and marginalized conditions remain at the highest risk. Women, children, and adolescents are particularly exposed to the convergence of multiple crises (see Chapter 2).

Younger generations face challenges across numerous domains, with outcomes varying based on gender, race, origin, socioeconomic status, disability, and other factors. Children, for example, suffer from poverty, hunger, inequality, armed conflicts, violence, displacement, terrorism, climate change, and the adverse effects of technology. This exposure to violence and trauma has severe consequences for their lives, development, and well-being. From what happens outside the home, on the streets, at school, in refugee camps and war-torn societies, to what happens at home at the hands of their own family members, childhood trauma often leads to a range of mental health problems,

such as anxiety, depression and PTSD. Ultimately, these issues hinder children's ability to fully exercise their rights and agency, including their right to participation.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child upholds children's right to have their views heard and taken seriously. Despite this, children continue to face discrimination and barriers to participation in decision-making processes, especially those in vulnerable and marginalized conditions. Consequently, many policies do not consider the children's perspective.

The present situation puts children's and young people's rights in jeopardy, not just now, but also in the future. **The impact of these crises extends beyond the present, affecting their ability to envision and build a better tomorrow.** The violation of their rights today traps them in a state of perpetual uncertainty, hindering their capacity to exercise their abilities and achieve their goals and desires.

In the face of these challenges, new perspectives are urgently needed. ChildFund Alliance, drawing on more than 80 years of collective member experience working with children and their families, believes that the current social pact is failing. Today's policies and interventions lack foresight, are proving to be unsustainable in the long run, and inadequate for addressing the contemporary landscape. We must prepare for future challenges by building resilience now. Therefore, adopting a new perspective is essential to addressing these ongoing challenges.

> The Convention on the Rights of the Child upholds children's right to have their views heard and taken seriously. Despite this, children continue to face discrimination and barriers to participation in decision-making processes, especially those in vulnerable and marginalized conditions. Consequently, many policies do not consider the children's perspective.

This is why we believe that the greatest challenge of our time is preserving and creating a future for young and new generations. So, we asked ourselves: should children and youth be recognized as having a right to the future?

Such concept is gaining traction among scholars[10] and practitioners as a way to recognize the need to address long-term and intergenerational issues, such as climate change, environmental degradation, and sustainable development for the sake of young and new generations.

> We believe that the greatest challenge of our time is preserving and creating a future for young and new generations

....

10 As far as scholars are concerned, of great importance is the contribution in the context of human rights of Edith Brown Weiss, who in her book "In Fairness to Future Generations" (1989) argues for the need to recognize the rights of future generations and to integrate these considerations into legal and policy frameworks.

Our understanding of the right to the future, developed in the following pages, acts as an interpretative framework. It could be defined as the inherent entitlement of individuals and communities – present and future – and especially of children and youth to live in and contribute to a world that ensures sustainable and equitable opportunities for growth, well-being, and development. Therefore, it is an invitation to look holistically at the complex and intersecting nature of the challenges that young generations—and even new generations—are experiencing. For us, talking about the right to the future does not necessarily mean recognizing a fully-fledged right but rather stimulating a new reflection. It means looking at the present and the future with new eyes, giving agency back to children and young people so that they can actively contribute to the creation of this future. It also means considering the complexity and multifacetedness of their needs and aspirations.
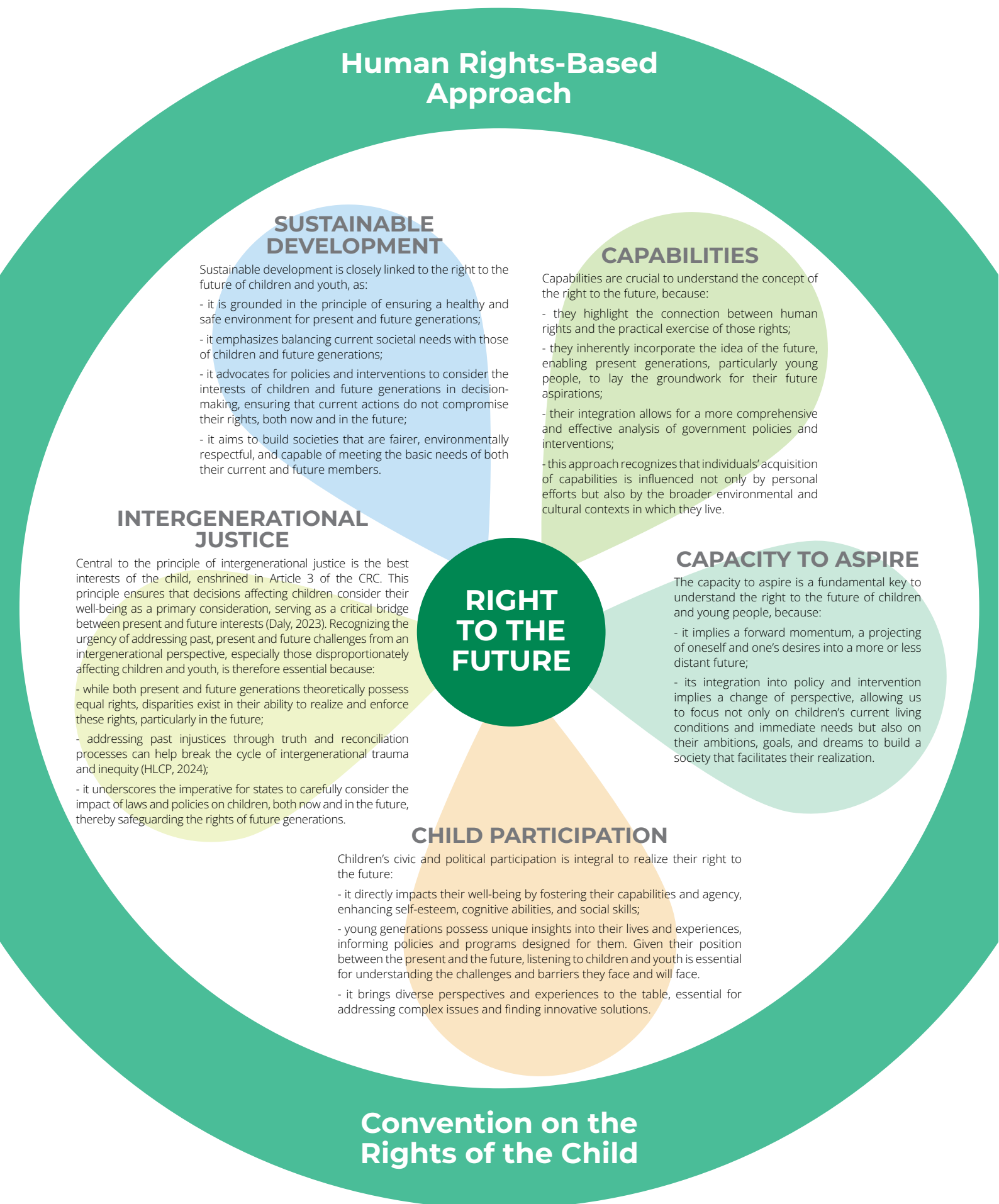
Such concept is not intended as a provocation, but as a call to focus on crucial aspects of human rights fulfilment and social responsibility. Talking about the right to the future involves thinking in terms of legacy and building a new social pact.

In order to derive our understanding of the right to the future, we researched international literature and law on development policy, human rights, and children's rights, and identified five building elements from a human rights and children's rights-based approach.

The five pillars are:

1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2. INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE

3. CAPABILITIES

4. CAPACITY TO ASPIRE

5. CHILD PARTICIPATION

Figure 31
ChildFund Alliance Understanding of The Right to The Future

Human Rights-Based Approach

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is closely linked to the right to the future of children and youth, as:

- it is grounded in the principle of ensuring a healthy and safe environment for present and future generations;

- it emphasizes balancing current societal needs with those of children and future generations;

- it advocates for policies and interventions to consider the interests of children and future generations in decision-making, ensuring that current actions do not compromise their rights, both now and in the future;

- it aims to build societies that are fairer, environmentally respectful, and capable of meeting the basic needs of both their current and future members.

CAPABILITIES

Capabilities are crucial to understand the concept of the right to the future, because:

- they highlight the connection between human rights and the practical exercise of those rights;

- they inherently incorporate the idea of the future, enabling present generations, particularly young people, to lay the groundwork for their future aspirations;

- their integration allows for a more comprehensive and effective analysis of government policies and interventions;

- this approach recognizes that individuals' acquisition of capabilities is influenced not only by personal efforts but also by the broader environmental and cultural contexts in which they live.

INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE

Central to the principle of intergenerational justice is the best interests of the child, enshrined in Article 3 of the CRC. This principle ensures that decisions affecting children consider their well-being as a primary consideration, serving as a critical bridge between present and future interests (Daly, 2023). Recognizing the urgency of addressing past, present and future challenges from an intergenerational perspective, especially those disproportionately affecting children and youth, is therefore essential because:

- while both present and future generations theoretically possess equal rights, disparities exist in their ability to realize and enforce these rights, particularly in the future;

- addressing past injustices through truth and reconciliation processes can help break the cycle of intergenerational trauma and inequity (HLCP, 2024);

- it underscores the imperative for states to carefully consider the impact of laws and policies on children, both now and in the future, thereby safeguarding the rights of future generations.

RIGHT TO THE FUTURE

CAPACITY TO ASPIRE

The capacity to aspire is a fundamental key to understand the right to the future of children and young people, because:

- it implies a forward momentum, a projecting of oneself and one's desires into a more or less distant future;

- its integration into policy and intervention implies a change of perspective, allowing us to focus not only on children's current living conditions and immediate needs but also on their ambitions, goals, and dreams to build a society that facilitates their realization.

CHILD PARTICIPATION

Children's civic and political participation is integral to realize their right to the future:

- it directly impacts their well-being by fostering their capabilities and agency, enhancing self-esteem, cognitive abilities, and social skills;

- young generations possess unique insights into their lives and experiences, informing policies and programs designed for them. Given their position between the present and the future, listening to children and youth is essential for understanding the challenges and barriers they face and will face.

- it brings diverse perspectives and experiences to the table, essential for addressing complex issues and finding innovative solutions.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

3.1.1 The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to development is a framework for sustainable development rooted in international human rights standards and principles. **The HRBA anchors development plans, policies, and processes in a system of corresponding rights and obligations established under international law, encompassing all civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights, including the right to development** (UNDP, 2006).

It introduces the idea that certain actors have duties to facilitate and foster development, targeting, supporting, and enabling entities responsible for delivering and protecting human rights to fulfill their obligations. This framework ensures that 'duty bearers' fulfill their obligations, and 'rights holders' can claim their rights. **It is essential to empower rights holders to claim their rights and ensure that duty bearers respect and protect these rights** (UNSDG, 2024). This approach promotes, protects, and implements rights through a joint effort of rights holders and duty bearers, including the State as the main duty bearer and the broader community.

The "human right to the future" is an implicit but critical component of international human rights legislation that is receiving more attention, particularly in relation to the rights of children and youth. Because the HRBA's principles are founded on a generally recognized body of law, we refer to this legal framework to retrace all the elements that concur with our understanding of the right to the future. **While this notion is not specifically stated in current treaties, it may be derived from a number of key documents and principles.**

3.1.2 The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

In this sense, a landmark achievement is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989. **The CRC recognizes children as social, economic, political, civil, and cultural actors, defining a child as anyone under the age of eighteen.** The Convention guarantees and sets minimum standards for protecting children's rights across 54 articles, emphasizing governments' responsibilities to protect these rights and ensure every child can enjoy them (UNICEF, 2019).

Some principles of the CRC implicitly contain the notion of the right to the future, making the Convention a compass for substantiating and deriving it. Specifically, these key human rights are:

► Non-discrimination (Article 2)

► Best interests of the child (Article 3)

► Realizing and concretizing rights (Article 4)

► Right to life and development (Article 6)

► Right to be listened to and respected (Article 12)

► Right to freedom of expression and of thought, conscience and religion (Articles 13 and 14)

► Rights to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (Article 15)

► Access to information and education (Articles 17 and 28)

► Rights to health, water, food, environment, and a safe home (Articles 24 and 27)

► Freedom and safeguarding of culture, language, and religion (Article 30)

► Right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (Article 31)

► Protection from violence, harmful work, sexual abuse, exploitation, and war (Articles 19, 32, 34, 36, 38)[11]

11 This perspective is further supported by General Comment No. 26 on children's rights and the environment,

3.1.3 The International Path to the Right to the Future

Referring to the principles enshrined in the CRC and the HRBA, **we identified tools and concepts in international documents and law that may help to define and support our understanding of the right to the future**. This integration enables us to focus on young and new generations, addressing crises and breaches of human rights while building the framework for a new social contract.

In recent years, international documents and treaties have increasingly adopted **a forward-looking perspective**[12]. **The international community has, in essence, embedded the concept of the "right to the future" within several internationally recognized frameworks, even though it has never been explicitly articulated**.

> The international community has embedded the concept of the "right to the future" within several internationally recognized frameworks, even though it has never been explicitly articulated.

with a particular emphasis on climate change, published by UNICEF in 2023. General Comment No. 26 articulates the obligation of states to safeguard children's rights not only from immediate threats but also from foreseeable infringements that may arise in the future as a result of current actions or inactions by states. Fore more information, see: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/crc/gcomments/gc26/2023/GC26-Child-Friendly-Version_English.pdf

12 The term 'forward-looking' has gained considerable recognition, including through the work of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). This approach can be used to develop future scenarios based on data and information. Indeed, in an era of multiplying and interconnected risks and challenges, fostering a culture of anticipatory and forward-looking analysis is essential to building resilience and ensuring sustainable development for future generations. For more information: https://www.undrr.org/our-work#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Office%20for%20Disaster%20Risk%20Reduction,of%20people%20and%20the%20future%20of%20the%20planet.

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This growing interest stems from a heightened awareness of the importance of considering the long-term consequences of current actions, interventions, and policies. Climate change and sustainable development, in particular, have driven the impetus for thinking and acting with a future-oriented perspective.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The assertion of rights with a focus on the future began to take hold in the 1970s, coinciding with a growing international awareness of the negative environmental impacts of human activity (Gallarati, 2023). The concept now referred to as the "right to the future" was initially operationalized and developed in conjunction with the term "sustainable development," promoting the preservation of Earth's resources. Sustainable development was first defined in the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report "Our common future"[13], published in 1987, as a set of policies that *"meet the needs of the present*

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13 The document came to be known as the "Brundtland Report" after the Commission's chairwoman, Gro Harlem Brundtland.

without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (UN, 1987). The document also outlined guiding principles for achieving long-term sustainable development, underscoring the urgency of making decisions to safeguard resources for present and future generations.

The concept of sustainable development was further solidified as a pillar of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as the "Earth Summit," held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. The conference established sustainability as a core principle for future development, aiming to align development efforts with the well-being of future generations. The notion emphasized that for development to be sustainable, current generations must pursue it without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Social Watch, 2012)[14]. Initially, discussions on sustainability primarily focused on environmental and climate change issues, with these

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14 Specifically, the concept of sustainable development has been expressed in two core documents of the Conference: UN (1992), *Agenda 21* and UN (1992), *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development*. For further information, see: https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/rio1992

problems seeming distant and uncertain. Consequently, the discourse centered on future generations, those yet unborn but who would inhabit the Earth in the distant future, rather than considering the rights of current generations. However, over time, the international community began to address sustainability with both young people and future generations in mind. This shift surfaced as it became evident that the impacts of climate change would manifest sooner rather than later. John Knox, the former United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, noted in 2018 that the individuals most affected by our present actions are already among us (Knox, 2018).

Children and youth emerge as the primary inheritors of our current actions and the most vulnerable to today's environmental crises. Therefore, sustainability serves as an approach to balance development in a manner that safeguards the interests of younger and future generations. Sustainable development intertwines the concepts of sustainability and human rights, ensuring that policies and interventions support development without compromising human rights,

both now and in the future (Arts, 2018). In essence, sustainable development must address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice, while prioritizing children's fundamental rights. **This includes their inherent right to life and development, non-discrimination, health, water, food, a safe environment, and a nurturing home.** Sustainable development aims to enable children to flourish, reach their full potential, and thrive in a sustainable world.

This integrated approach is exemplified by the UN 2030 Agenda, which reaffirms the centrality of human rights to sustainable development, promoting a development that **leaves no one behind** and is firmly anchored in human rights principles and standards. **It places children's rights and well-being at the forefront of sustainable development efforts, aiming to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion from one generation to the next**[15] (OHCHR, 2020). Indeed,

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15 In 2017, the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) presented a report on the protection of the rights of the child in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It established the interlinked nature of the rights of the child and the 2030 Agenda, highlighting that all SDGs and targets, while not explicitly naming children,

the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include some crucial issues regarding children, including eradicating poverty, promoting quality education for all, reducing child mortality, promoting the health and well-being of children, combating violence and abuse against children, and promoting inclusive and sustainable societies for all.

Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda recognizes the importance of listening to and involving children in decisions that affect them, guaranteeing their right to actively participate in the society in which they live. In this way, it integrates sustainable development with children's rights: to achieve the former it is necessary to promote and protect the latter (OHCHR, 2016). In this sense, sustainable development encompasses a broader range of issues, referring to the building of more equitable societies and durable social pacts, and going beyond the concept of sustainability that is anchored solely in environmental issues.

....

are linked to protecting and promoting children's rights (OHCHR, 2019). To consult the report: https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g16/433/91/pdf/g1643391.pdf?token=w90Eta9DyhWdMPRJ6I&fe=true

How does this relate to our understanding of the right to the future?

Sustainable development is closely linked to the right to the future of children and youth, as it is grounded in the principle of ensuring a healthy and safe environment for present and future generations. This concept emphasizes balancing current societal needs with those of children and future generations, preserving natural resources, and protecting the well-being of people. However, sustainable development extends beyond environmental and climate concerns. It also advocates for policies and interventions to consider the interests of children and future generations in decision-making, ensuring that current actions do not compromise their rights, both now and in the future. This approach aims to build societies that are fairer, environmentally respectful, and capable of meeting the basic needs of both their current and future members.

INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE

The concept of intergenerational justice, which bridges the past, present, and future, has deep roots in various legal cultures, including those of some indigenous people (Gallarati, 2023). Initially introduced in the context of climate change and sustainable development, it emerged under the banner of "intergenerational climate justice." **This concept underscores the need for a collective, intergenerational vision in shaping policies and interventions, recognizing that the actions taken today profoundly impact future generations** (Wang & Chang, 2023).

▶ **Intergenerational Equity,** defined as fairness among generations (HLCP, 2024), asserts that the Earth and its resources are shared by all generations, past, present, and future (Weiss, 2021). Consequently, all generations bear a collective responsibility to preserve the environment and uphold each other's well-being.

▶ **Distributive Justice,** often referred to as the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, acknowledges that countries have varying responsibilities and capacities to address climate change (Wang & Chang, 2023). For instance, the Kyoto Protocol[16] (UN, 1997) placed the burden of reducing emissions on high-income nations, recognizing their historical contributions to greenhouse gas concentrations.

By embracing these principles, the present generations hold a unique responsibility to prevent the adverse impacts of climate change from burdening future generations (Hiskes, 2005). Intergenerational justice emphasizes the duties and obligations of current generations towards future ones, underscoring that inaction today jeopardizes the rights of future generations (Nguyen, 2020).

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16 For further information, visit: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/250111?v=pdf

This perspective operationalizes duties to future generations by advocating for equitable distribution of benefits, risks, and costs across all sectors (HLCP, 2024).

Expanding the discourse through a human rights lens, intergenerational justice aims to ensure equal rights, opportunities, and well-being for all individuals across time, regardless of factors such as gender, race, or socio-economic status. Actions and policies must be evaluated for their potential impacts on future generations in environmental, social, economic, and cultural terms.

The importance of adopting an intergenerational justice perspective is reaffirmed in the document *Intergenerational Solidarity. Strengthening Economic and Social Ties* (UNECE, 2011), and in the Paris Agreement (2015). The former links this concept to that of economic, environmental and social sustainability: indeed, **intergenerational justice requires both sustainable management of economic resources, so that they do not impose burdens on future generations, preservation of the environment, and access for all generations to opportunities and resources in an equitable manner.**

The latter, instead, emphasizes the need to consider the intergenerational consequences of climate action (UNFCC, 2016). From the standpoint of the right to the future, intergenerational justice plays a pivotal role. Policies and interventions informed by this perspective are crafted with an understanding of their differential impacts on generations and the legacy they leave for future individuals.

How does this relate to our understanding of the right to the future?

Recognizing the urgency of addressing present challenges, especially those disproportionately affecting children and youth, is essential.

While both present and future generations theoretically possess equal rights, disparities exist in their ability to realize and enforce these rights, particularly in the future. **Addressing past injustices through truth and reconciliation processes can help break the cycle of intergenerational trauma and inequity** (HLCP, 2024).

Central to the principle of intergenerational justice is the best interests of the child, enshrined in Article 3 of the CRC. This principle ensures that decisions affecting children consider their well-being as a primary consideration, serving as a critical bridge between present and future interests (Daly, 2023).

It underscores the imperative for states to carefully consider the impact of laws and policies on children, both now and in the future, thereby safeguarding the rights of future generations.

CAPABILITIES

For many years, a country's quality of life and well-being were predominantly assessed through economic indicators like GDP per capita. However, this approach has been increasingly recognized as inadequate since the latter part of the 20th century. Economic growth, it turns out, does not necessarily translate to improvements in crucial areas like health, education, or political freedom (Sen, 1974; 1979). Therefore, in 1980, an alternative approach emerged, one that seemed better suited to evaluating people's quality of life: **the capabilities approach**. Initially proposed by philosopher and economist Amartya Sen, this perspective was later developed further within the broader framework of human rights by philosopher Martha Nussbaum. The capabilities approach states that to truly exercise their rights, individuals must possess the practical abilities to implement and realize them, moving beyond mere assertion to active exercise. Thus, people must have capabilities to exercise their rights effectively (Sen, 1999). **Capabilities refer to the actual opportunities individuals have to pursue and achieve their goals. Essential to this is the freedom to choose in accordance with one's own aspirations and values.** Examples of capabilities include living a healthy life, having access to education and information, engaging in leisure activities, participating in public life, and having access to essential resources and services.

This approach is closely intertwined with the concept of human right**s. Emphasizing agency, it underscores that guaranteeing human rights entails empowering individuals to choose and act freely according to their own aspirations.** It stresses the concrete exercise of human rights rather than their mere acknowledgment, highlighting the need to create real opportunities. Moreover, it links the latter to fundamental human rights with the corresponding duties, primarily

borne by governments, to ensure all citizens enjoy their capabilities. Indeed, all rights, conceived as entitlements to capabilities, necessitate material, social, and political conditions, requiring institutional action (Nussbaum, 2011). Given its alignment with human rights principles, the capabilities approach has gained traction at the international level, guiding policies, interventions, and assessments. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) produces an annual Human Development Report, ranking nations based on capabilities rather than GDP. Initially launched in 1990 by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen, the report seeks to prioritize people as both the purpose and agents of development, emphasizing the provision of choices and freedoms. Notably, it has introduced the Human Development Index, which evaluates development based on the opportunities available to individuals in various contexts and regions[17].

The capabilities approach can be aligned with children's rights established in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), combining the provision of material resources with the realization of children's potential and opportunities for full development. The CRC outlines a series of rights that can be seen as capabilities that children should be able to develop and exercise. For example, the right to life, survival, and development (Article 6) can be interpreted as the capability to enjoy good health and physical development. **The right to education (Article 28) is a key capability that enables children to develop other capabilities, since it is essential for their intellectual and personal development. The capability of participation (Article 12, the right to**

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17 Specifically, through 3 dimensions: life expectancy, education and life standard (GNI per capita).

How does this relate to the right to the future?

From our perspective, capabilities are crucial to understand the concept of the right to the future, because they highlight the connection between human rights and the practical exercise of those rights. The concept of capabilities inherently incorporates the idea of the future, enabling present generations, particularly young people, to lay the groundwork for their future aspirations. Integrating the capability approach allows for a more comprehensive and effective analysis of government policies and interventions. **By evaluating whether duty bearers create environments that foster the exercise of capabilities, this approach recognizes that individuals' acquisition of capabilities is influenced not only by personal efforts but also by the broader environmental and cultural contexts in which they live.** Therefore, action is needed to promote transformative change.

be listened to and taken seriously) allows children to develop self-esteem, communication skills, and a sense of responsibility. The application of the capabilities approach to children's rights requires a commitment to creating conditions that allow children to develop and realize their potential. This approach is useful for guiding and informing policies and interventions in ways that focus on the actual opportunities children have to grow and thrive, going beyond the mere distribution of material resources to include a more holistic and integrated view of their well-being[18].

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18 Some examples of specific policies for children that have adopted the capabilities approach are: Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in India, started in 1975, is a program that provides a range of services such as nutrition, health, preschool education, and early childhood development for children under the age of 6, to improve their physical, cognitive, and social capabilities; Asignación Universal por Hijo (Universal Child Allowance in Argentina Description) is a program that provides cash transfers to low-income families with children, conditioned on children attending school and receiving regular medical care, aiming to reduce child poverty and improve access to education and healthcare, allowing children to develop their capabilities in a more favorable environment.

CAPACITY TO ASPIRE

The concept of capabilities is closely intertwined with the notion of "capacity to aspire," which, while not always explicitly named, aligns with principles found in documents related to children's rights, education, development, and social justice, and that we find instrumental in understanding the right to the future.

Sociology introduced the notion of aspirations as a pivotal factor shaping an individual's life trajectory and well-being as far back as the 1960s. Aspirations, including career aspirations, influence decisions regarding education, job-seeking, and income. Appadurai (2004) was among the first to conceptualize aspiration as a capability, referring to it as "the capacity to aspire." **He highlighted that this capacity is unevenly distributed across society, with individuals from less privileged backgrounds facing more constrained social contexts in which to explore possibilities compared to their more privileged counterparts.**

The capacity to aspire hinges on individuals having tangible opportunities to pursue and achieve their goals. It is grounded in existing capabilities and practices, influenced by contextual factors and various obstacles that may limit capabilities. Aspirations are inherently realistic, not fanciful dreams beyond reach (Nathan, 2005).

Aligned with CRC Articles 28 and 29 and Goal 4 of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, which strive to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education while promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, several international documents stress the significance of certain opportunities and capabilities crucial for enhancing the capacity to aspire. For instance, the "World Program of Action for Youth" (WPAY) underscores the importance of youth empowerment and the necessity for policies that enable young

people to cultivate their capacities and aspirations (UN, 2010). Additionally, the United Nations "Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training" (2011) underscores the pivotal role of education in fostering a universal culture of human rights, which is fundamental for nurturing the capacity to aspire.

Lastly, the International Labour Organization (ILO) addressed the link between the capacity to aspire, young generations, and their future in its 2020 report titled *Youth Aspirations and the Future of Work*[19]. The ILO emphasized that the aspirations of young people are vital for their human capital investment, educational decisions, and labor market outcomes. Recognizing these aspirations is crucial when formulating effective employment policies to prevent continued disenfranchisement of young people.

In the context of the right to the future, the capacity to aspire entails adolescents and children being empowered to envision their future, fostering ambition about their lives, careers, families, and more. Developing this capacity involves not only dreaming but also connecting immediate steps with intermediate and future goals. This bridge between the present and the future cultivates the capacity to aspire, which, in turn, drives capability development.

Moreover, the capacity to aspire serves as a link between the past and the future—shaped by previous capabilities and influencing the utilization of existing capabilities to shape future ones.

In essence, the "capacity to aspire" refers to individuals' ability, particularly children and youth, to envision and strive for their future, bolstered by a foundation of rights and opportunities. This entails:

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19 To see the Report, visit:
https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_755248.pdf

▶ Access to quality education that cultivates critical thinking, creativity, and the development of talents and abilities (CRC Articles 28 and 29, SDG 4).
▶ Ensuring conditions conducive to physical, mental, and emotional development (CRC Article 6).
▶ Recognizing and valuing the cultural contexts that shape aspirations (Appadurai, 2004).
▶ Eliminating barriers to freedom and broadening individuals' capabilities to choose and pursue the lives they value (Nussbaum, 2011).

How does this relate to our understanding of the right to the future?

The capacity to aspire implies a forward momentum, a projecting of oneself and one's desires into a more or less distant future. For precisely this reason, we believe that the capacity to aspire is a fundamental key to understanding the right to the future of children and young people. We believe that children's and youth's aspirations should be integrated into all policies and interventions concerning them. This entails a shift in our perspective: **we must not only focus on their current living conditions and immediate needs but also incorporate their ambitions, goals, and dreams to build a society that facilitates their realization**. Crucially, listening to and taking seriously the views of young people are prerequisites for implementing and strengthening the capacity to aspire.

CHILD PARTICIPATION

Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, there has been a profound shift in how children and adolescents are perceived and treated: as individuals entitled to their own rights, encompassing civil and political liberties. **The CRC solidified in international law the principle that children have the right to be heard. By ratifying the CRC, states affirmed that every child has the right to participate in decisions affecting them and that decision-makers are obliged to listen to and consider their views**.

At the core of international policy on child participation lies Article 12 of the CRC. This article delineates two fundamental rights: the right to express one's views and the right to have those views accorded due consideration. The freedom to express their perspectives empowers children to share relevant insights and influence decision-making. Moreover, it mandates state parties to actively listen to children and facilitate their involvement in all matters concerning them.

Expanding upon the notion of participation outlined in Article 12, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its General Comments 12, defined child participation as an "ongoing process," characterized by information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults founded on mutual respect. In this process, children learn how their views, along with those of adults, inform and shape outcomes (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009).

This definition underscores children's participation as an active, ongoing process wherein they are viewed as change agents, engaged in constructive dialogue with adults and institutions. **Recognizing children and youth as agents of change necessitates affording them opportunities to participate in decision-making**

processes across various levels, from family to international. Adults play a crucial role in this by creating spaces for children to voice their opinions, thereby enhancing their capacity to contribute to society. This can be achieved through empowering children, providing access to education and information, and fostering positive relationships among children, adults, and communities.

In recent years, more children and young people have been asserting their voices in decision-making processes. Many countries have developed legal and policy frameworks, and mechanisms have been established to support children's participation. However, significant barriers persist, hindering the practical realization of their right to participate and be heard. For example, only 2.4 % of climate funds from key multilateral climate funds supports projects incorporating child-responsive activities (UNICEF, 2023).

How does this relate to our understanding of the right to the future?

Children's civic and political participation is integral to realize their right to the future. Firstly, it directly impacts their well-being by fostering their capabilities and agency, enhancing self-esteem, cognitive abilities, and social skills. Secondly, young generations possess unique insights into their lives and experiences, informing policies and programs designed for them. Given their position between the present and the future, listening to children and youth is essential for understanding the challenges and barriers they face and will face. Lastly, their participation brings diverse perspectives and experiences to the table, essential for addressing complex issues and finding innovative solutions. Therefore, enhancing such participation processes benefits not only children and youth but also their families and communities as a whole.

3.1.4 The Recent Debate

Since 2020, the international community has increasingly focused on the future. A plethora of documents, policies, and meetings have emerged, frequently drawing upon and incorporating concepts such as sustainable development, intergenerational justice, and child participation. These principles are viewed as foundational for safeguarding human rights, both in the present and in the future.

Jake Lyell Photography

From the Future Generations...

In 2020, during the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the Secretary General released the report "Our Common Agenda" (UN, 2021), with recommendations to advance the UN common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges.

In this document, the Secretary-General calls for a Declaration on Future Generations[20], a Futures Lab[21] and a UN Special Envoy to **ensure that policy and budget decisions consider their impact on future generations.** However, this document fails to explicitly acknowledge individuals, groups, and people who will exist in the future as bearers of fundamental human rights. It also lacks clarity on the connection between the ongoing repercussions of past injustices and the violation of human rights among present and future generations. While the document introduces a crucial future-oriented perspective, its efficacy relies on implementation and supplementation by the normative and accountability framework of international human rights law.

In response to this need, a coalition of legal and human rights experts from across the globe initiated a comprehensive examination in 2017. Over a six-year period, they meticulously scrutinized the state of human rights law concerning future generations, concluding their efforts in 2023. Their research encompassed legal analysis, international treaties, national constitutions and legislation, insights from Indigenous Peoples, and consultations with key social movements and experts. **The result is the "Maastricht Principles on the Human Rights of Future Generations"**[22]**, adopted in February 2023 and endorsed by nearly 60 leading human rights experts** from around the world (Rights of Future Generations, 2023).

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20 See the box The Pact for the Future: The Zero Draft.

21 The United Nations Futures Lab is a network that enables the international community to use futuristic thinking and strategic foresight in planning, policy and decision-making. In this way, the United Nations and international planning move from short-term reactions to long-term sustainable choices and policies. For more information: https://un-futureslab.org/

22 For further information, visit: *https://www.rightsoffuturegenerations.org/the-principles*

The Maastricht Principles serve to elucidate the application of human rights to future generations. They affirm that human rights are timeless and extend fully to future generations, emphasizing the inherent coverage of future generations within the existing framework of human rights law.

The significance of these principles in defining the right to the future is threefold:

- ▶ Firstly, they underscore the critical importance of recognizing the intergenerational dimensions of present actions and decisions.
- ▶ Secondly, they highlight the necessity of evolving decision-making processes to ensure both justice and sustainability for present, near future, and distant generations.
- ▶ Lastly, they emphasize the central role of the younger generation in these processes.

Indeed, it is claimed that: *"Children and youth are closest in time to generations still to come and thus occupy a unique position, and have an important role to play, within this transition to long-term, multigenerational thinking. Accordingly, their perspectives and participation in decision-making with respect to long-term and intergenerational risks must be accorded special weight."* (ibid.).

Hence, it is imperative that states ensure the full realization of children's and adolescents' human rights in the present while safeguarding them for the future.

Although the Principles primarily address the rights of future generations, who are yet to come but will be impacted by present decisions, there is also a focus on the rights of children and their future. **This underscores the significance of younger generations, who occupy a unique position bridging the present and the future.** With this dual perspective, they play a crucial role in fostering a transition toward long-term, sustainable, and intergenerational approaches and thinking.

...to the Future of the Present Ones

With the international community's newfound focus on the future and the younger generations, the Secretary-General extended an invitation to young people to address the challenges confronting both present and future generations, particularly those under the age of 30. Responding to this call, a group of youths, comprising eight UN Foundation Next Generation Fellows, collaborated to answer the Secretary-General's call through their report "Our Future Agenda" (2021).

The document explicitly underscores the need for collective actions to safeguard children's and youth's rights in the future. Specifically, it identifies the youth's entitlement to the future, acknowledging that as young people confront crises they did not cause, "Our Future Agenda" advocates for a new social contract and a revitalized multilateral system that prioritizes listening to and working with young people to guarantee their rights, both today and tomorrow.

To establish this new social contract, the Our Future Agenda report outlines key areas considered crucial for the future well-being of children and adolescents:

- ▶ Education: Providing an accessible space for curiosity, creativity, and entrepreneurship, preparing youth for the future of work, where they learn their rights and responsibilities as global citizens and acquire the skills needed to thrive.
- ▶ Employment: Ensuring secure, stable, and meaningful employment opportunities free from discrimination based on age or any other factor.
- ▶ Environmental Protection: Empowering young people to safeguard the planet for current and future generations by asserting their environmental rights and addressing the looming threats of climate change and other catastrophic risks.
- ▶ Youth and Child Participation: Reimagining international institutions to provide spaces for young people to shape the future, amplifying their voices, and integrating them into decision-making processes.

In this context, adopting a future-oriented perspective serves as a framework wherein young people, once a silent majority, emerge as architects of their rights and architects of their future. "Our Future Agenda", together with "Our Common Agenda", have led to the organization of "The Summit of The Future", an event bringing world leaders together in September 2024 to forge a new international consensus on how to better meet the needs of the present while also safeguarding the future.

The Pact for the Future: United Nations System Common Principles on Future Generations

In May 2023, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination endorsed the "Common Principles on Future Generations", which were developed by the High-level Committee on Programs (HLCP) and subsequently approved. This set of principles builds upon the United Nations' longstanding recognition of the significance of future generations, tracing back to the UN Charter and, notably, the adoption in 1997 by UNESCO Member States of the "Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations towards Future Generations". One of the key objectives of these principles is to establish a shared set of values across the UN system and the international community.

A pivotal aspect of the journey towards ensuring the right to the future lies in the statements articulated in the preamble. While these statements specifically address future generations, they also emphasize that upholding the rights and fulfilling the needs of present generations are fundamental prerequisites for a more promising shared future. It is recognized that decisions made today will inevitably impact a wide array of internationally recognized human rights (HLCP, 2024).

Furthermore, the Principles underscore the unique role of children and youth in this context. Despite belonging to the present generations, their lives extend further into the future than those of adults. Consequently, they are projected to be more profoundly affected by short-term thinking and inadequate decisions made today.

This proximity to future generations leads to children and youth often being referred to as "future leaders". While they should not bear the sole responsibility of representing future generations, they deserve distinct and dedicated participation in decision-making processes. It is imperative that their engagement in these processes is meaningful and effective, thereby fostering the development of intergenerational partnerships that consider the specific needs and preferences of both younger and older generations in discussions concerning the future (ibid.).

Therefore, in order to uphold the principle of intergenerational equity and fulfill our duties to the future, it is essential to strike a balance between meeting the needs of present and future generations. Each generation must act as stewards and custodians of society and the planet, ensuring the well-being of future generations and the sustainability of the world they will inherit.

The Pact for the Future: The Zero Draft

The international community's journey to fully affirm the need to safeguard the future of the present generations, in particular the younger generations, and the future one is to take shape in the September 2024 "Summit of the Future, Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow".

Ahead of the event, Germany and Namibia, co-facilitators of the Summit, released the zero draft of the Pact for the Future[23] (UN, 2024). The draft served as an initial framework for intergovernmental discussions during the Summit, aiming to adopt an ambitious, concise, and action-oriented Pact for the Future.

The document outlines five key areas where significant action is needed: Sustainable development and financing; International Peace and Security; Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation; Transforming global governance; and Youth and Future Generations (ibid.).

The focus on youth and future generations within the draft holds particular significance for several reasons:

► It emphasizes the importance of considering not only tomorrow's generations when discussing the future, but also children and young people. They will inevitably inherit the consequences of both current actions and inactions.

► Secondly, it aligns with the "Common Principles on Future Generations", acknowledging that children and youth constitute a distinct group from future generations. Presently, they often face deprivation of the necessary conditions to realize their full potential. Therefore, addressing the needs and aspirations of all young people, including those in vulnerable situations or experiencing various forms of discrimination, is imperative.

► Moreover, it acknowledges the role of children and youth as critical agents of positive change, stressing the significance of their active, meaningful, and inclusive participation in decision-making processes.

► As a result, it commits to significant levels of investment in and engagement by young people at both national and international levels to secure a better future for all. It recognizes that ensuring the participation of children and adolescents and the realization of their rights are inherently tied to the well-being of society as a whole.

Ultimately, the draft acknowledges the unique position, needs, and rights of young people and children concerning the future. It underscores their connection to the broader community, emphasizing that promoting their right to the future is synonymous with advancing the rights of both present and future generations. Therefore, adolescents and children are rightfully defined as crucial actors and planners in shaping the future.

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23 In December 2023, the co-facilitators also shared the "Declaration on Future Generations Roadmap", where they share their plan for the intergovernmental negotiations. The Declaration is expected to be negotiated throughout the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, will be annexed to the Pact of the Future and will form one of the outcomes of the Summit of the Future. For further information, see: https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/declaration-on-future-generations

The debate on the right to the future in international human rights law is ongoing and multifaceted. It involves integrating principles of intergenerational justice, sustainability, and the protection of children's prospects into the broader human rights framework. The increasing recognition of the long-term and intergenerational impacts of current policies and actions suggests that the notion of a "right to the future" may become more prominent in international human rights discourse.

Indeed, while there may not be specific data on the impact of a human right to the future on children and adolescents facing poly-crises, existing literature and principles within international human rights law suggest that adopting such a framework would provide essential protections, opportunities for participation, and support for building resilient communities in the face of emerging threats.

Figure 32
ChildFund Alliance Understanding of The Right to The Future

THE 5 PILLARS	REFERENCES	CRC LINKED RIGHTS
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	• World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), Our common future • UN (1992), Agenda 21 • UN (1992), Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development • UN (2015), Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development • UNFCC (2016), The Paris Agreement • UN (2021), Our Common Agenda • UN Foundation Next Generation Fellows (2021), Our Future Agenda • HLCP (2023), Common Principles on Future Generations	• Right to life and development (Article 6) • Right to be heard and respected (Article 12) • Right to freedom of expression and of thought, conscience and religion (Articles 13 and 14) • Rights to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (Article 15) • Access to information and education (Articles 17 and 28) • Rights to health, water, food, environment, and a safe home (Articles 24 and 27) • Freedom and safeguarding of culture, language, and religion (Article 30) • Protection from violence, harmful work, sexual abuse, exploitation, and war (Articles 19, 32, 34, 36, 38)
INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE	• UN (1987), Our Common Future • UN (1997), Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change • UNECE (2011), Intergenerational Solidarity: Strengthening Economic and Social Ties • UNFCC (2016), The Paris Agreement • UN (2021), Our Common Agenda • UN Foundation Next Generation Fellows (2021), Our Future Agenda • HLCP (2023), Common Principles on Future Generations • Rights of Future Generations (2023), Maastricht Principles on the Human Rights of Future Generations	• Non-discrimination (Article 2) • Best interests of the child (Article 3) • Right to life and development (Article 6) • Right to be heard and respected (Article 12) • Rights to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (Article 15) • Rights to health, water, food, environment, and a safe home (Articles 24 and 27) • Right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (Article 31) • Protection from violence, harmful work, sexual abuse, exploitation, and war (Articles 19, 32, 34, 36, 38)
CAPABILITIES	• Sen, A. (1974), On Economic Inequality • Sen, A. (1979), Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation • UN (from 1990 onwards), Human Development Report • Sen, A. (1999), Development as Freedom • Nussbaum, M. (2011), Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach	• Right to be heard and respected (Article 12) • Right to freedom of expression and of thought, conscience and religion (Articles 13 and 14) • Rights to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (Article 15) • Rights to health, water, food, environment, and a safe home (Articles 24 and 27) • Right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (Article 31) • Protection from violence, harmful work, sexual abuse, exploitation, and war (Articles 19, 32, 34, 36, 38)
CAPACITY TO ASPIRE	• Appadurai, A. (2004), The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition • Un (2010), World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) • Nussbaum, M. (2011), Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach • UN (2011), Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training • ILO (2020), Youth Aspirations and the Future of Work	• Right to be heard and respected (Article 12) • Right to freedom of expression and of thought, conscience and religion (Articles 13 and 14) • Rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15) • Access to information and education (Articles 17 and 28) • Rights to health, water, food, environment, and a safe home (Articles 24 and 27) • Right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (Article 31)
CHILD PARTICIPATION	• UN (1989), Convention on the Rights of the Child • Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009), General Comment N°12 • UN (2015), Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development • UN (2021), Our Common Agenda • UN Foundation Next Generation Fellows (2021), Our Future Agenda • HLCP (2023), Common Principles on Future Generations	• Right to be heard and respected (Article 12) • Right to freedom of expression and of thought, conscience and religion (Articles 13 and 14) • Rights to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (Article 15) • Right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (Article 31)

3.1.5 ChildFund's Commitment to the Right to the Future

The current international landscape looks unfavorable for promoting the human rights of children and adolescents. **The lack of a forward-looking approach that considers not only their needs but also their aspirations could jeopardize their future.**

ChildFund Alliance has always strived to ensure that the human rights of children and young people are promoted, respected, and realized, working alongside them and their communities to address emerging threats, and promoting opportunities for them to become active participants and creators of positive change. This implies their direct involvement in identifying their needs and aspirations, recognizing them as rights holders who must be enabled to exercise their agency.

Building a better future requires action today, and this cannot be achieved without allowing children and adolescents to express their voices and actively participate.

For this reason, in ChildFund Alliance's 2024 World Index on Women's and Children's Rights, we conducted a child participation exercise to inform our interventions and activities, making our actions increasingly responsive to the requests of children and young people. Referring to the notion of the right to the future as our guiding principle, we conducted a global consultation.

We asked children and adolescents to share their concerns, fears, expectations, and aspirations for the future, considering current challenges such as poverty, wars and conflicts, climate change, violence, and abuse, alongside their dreams and objectives. **The results, presented in the following pages, reflect the voices of 10,000 children and adolescents from 41 countries.**

In addition to the consultation results, we present examples of good practices implemented by the 11 members of the ChildFund Alliance to ensure the right to a future for young people and children, along with a series of recommendations

How the Summit of the Future has Addressed Children's Rights and Needs

The Summit of the Future (SOTF), held 22-23 September 2024, aimed to forge a new global consensus on how the international community can best respond to emerging challenges and opportunities, safeguard the future, and accelerate efforts to fulfill the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To be certain, without children, there will be no future. This is why Member States must do everything to fulfill their obligation under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees children's right to be heard in all matters affecting them. More must and can be done to facilitate children's meaningful participation in global decision-making processes.

The SOTF resulted in the adoption of three outcome documents: Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact (annex), and the Declaration on Future Generations (annex)[24]. These documents constitute a promising step in guaranteeing children's rights. While early drafts largely omitted language on children, all final versions include strong references to children's rights and needs, as well as actionable steps on how to address them. This was achieved as a result of the collective efforts of child rights organizations and like-minded civil society organizations, in close collaboration with Member States and UN agencies working together to ensure children's voices were part of numerous rounds of negotiations.

Though the Pact and its two annexes are neither legally binding nor enforceable, the inclusion and visibility of children is indispensable in that the three documents direct the global agenda and guide governments on priority actions to safeguard children's rights and wellbeing. This will help ensure humanity has a future, and the world is equipped to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

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24 To read the documents, visit: https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future

3.2
ChildFund Alliance Global Consultation on the Right to the Future

In February 2024, ChildFund Alliance launched a global consultation involving more than 10,000 children and adolescents across 41 countries worldwide. This initiative was made possible through the collaborative efforts of ChildFund Alliance's 11 member organizations and their local partners.

The consultation represents a comprehensive exercise in child listening and participation, enabling the Alliance members to realign their interventions based on the voices of children and adolescents. Its goal is to contribute to public discourse on children's rights and catalyze concrete changes in project strategies and policies, with a specific focus on child participation.

The consultation is structured into four main sections (getting to know the sample; children's and adolescents' rights at present; envisioning the future; and shaping the future), predominantly featuring closed-ended questions with two open-ended inquiries. Most responses to open-ended questions are reported as testimonials in the final section of this chapter, with selected insights also integrated into the quantitative results to emphasize key themes and nuances.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTATION

▶ Assess the extent to which children and adolescents involved in ChildFund Alliance projects—which reach approximately 30 million children in more than 70 countries—realize their fundamental rights.

▶ Assess whether children and adolescents recognize themselves as rights holders.

▶ Investigate the worries, expectations, priorities and aspirations of children and adolescents regarding their future.

▶ Engage children and adolescents in an open dialogue on issues affecting their daily lives.

▶ Identify major intervention areas based on children's and adolescents' needs and expectations in order to produce focused recommendations and policies.

GENERAL METHODOLOGICAL INFORMATION[25]

▶ The questionnaire used for the consultation was developed by a panel of experts, including specialists in Child Protection and Education, and subsequently reviewed and validated by ChildFund Alliance's Advocacy Task Force.

▶ The consultation did not aim to engage a statistically representative sample of the child population, but rather engaged more than 10,000 children and adolescents aged 10 to 18 in 41 countries (out of 70 where the Alliance operates). Participants were reached through projects im-

plemented by our member organizations and/or local partners in different countries.

▶ The selected countries were chosen based on their status as operational areas for ChildFund Alliance. The data should not be regarded as representative of entire nations; in some countries, the Alliance operates extensively across all regions (with multiple members working concurrently, such as in Brazil), while in others, surveys were conducted only in specific areas where a single member operates (e.g., Lebanon and Tanzania).

▶ The global consultation encompassed a diverse range of countries and a broad age demographic. Therefore, questions were formulated generically rather than tailored to specific age groups or cultural contexts. While this approach does not delve into the nuances of individual country situations, it allows for comparable insights across the broader sample.

▶ The global consultation was conducted through various methods: children and adolescents could independently complete the questionnaire by scanning a QR code; guided completion sessions were conducted through group exercises in other regions (using paper-based questionnaires); and facilitated sessions involved interviewers conducting surveys with individual children and entering responses into tablets.

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25 To consult the complete methodological note, see the Appendix.

Highlights from ChildFund Alliance Global Consultation / part 1

GETTING TO KNOW THE SAMPLE

The sample comrprised 10,000 boys and girls aged 10 to 18 from 41 countries. We first asked several questions to better identify their social profile with the aim of analyzing the responses considering varying backgrounds, life experiences, and conditions.

▶ More than 1 in 7 children with disabilities report not attending school regularly.

▶ In Central and West Africa, almost 1 in 3 children say they do not go to school regularly.

▶ Almost 1 in 10 children say they are currently working.

▶ More than 1 in 7 children do not have clothes in good condition or school supplies, and do not feel full after each meal.

▶ Food insecurity increases dramatically among children with disabilities, affecting nearly 1 in 4 (23%) compared to 14% of those who do not have a disability.

▶ More than 1 in 4 children among the respondents have low socioeconomic status. In Central and West Africa, this figure rises to more than 7 in 10.

▶ More than 1 in 10 children do not usually feel happy. In Central and West Africa this figure rises to more than 1 in 3 children.

▶ The level of happiness correlates positively with both school attendance and food security, indicating that children who attend school regularly and feel full after each meal tend to be happier.

CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' RIGHTS AT PRESENT

This second part of the consultation focuses on the current status of children, their rights, the challenges they face, and instances of rights violations, as well as the role of adults in safeguarding their rights.

▶ More than 1 in 5 children have a weak perception of their rights.

▶ Boys tend to have weaker perceptions of their rights compared to girls.

▶ Almost 3 out of 10 children with low socioeconomic status have a weak perception of their rights, in contrast to almost 2 out of 10 among those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Vulnerability and marginalization adversely impact children's recognition of themselves as rights holders.

▶ 4 children out of 10 report feeling unsafe due to wars and crime.

▶ Almost 1 in 3 children say that adults do not ask for their opinion.

▶ 1 child out of 4 report that adults say or do things that make them feel bad.

▶ Children with disabilities tend to be more discriminated against, with 45.7% of them saying they are treated differently from other children, compared to 19.9% of children who do not have a disability.

▶ Children whose social identities are subjected to multiple forms of discrimination, or those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, face more difficulties in seeing their rights respected and fulfilled.

▶ More than 1 in 4 children believe that adults do not fully promote their rights.

▶ A positive correlation emerges between children's perception of their rights and the actual promotion of these rights by adults. Living in environments where rights are effectively recognized and upheld by duty bearers significantly influences children's self-perception as rights holders.

Highlights from ChildFund Alliance Global Consultation / part 2

IMAGINING THE FUTURE

The third part of the consultation focuses on children's perceptions of their future, particularly their ability to envision it. The questions delve into their fears, anxieties, uncertainties, as well as their hopes, expectations, and dreams.

▶ The three primary concerns that children have about their future are unemployment, poverty and epidemics.

▶ Children who perceive high levels of rights promotion by adults in their lives are generally less anxious about future threats. This correlation suggests that children who have confidence in responsible adults—such as parents, teachers, and other authority figures—feel more safeguarded and secure.

▶ Children who do not regularly experience happiness tend to express higher levels of fear about their future compared to their peers.

▶ Almost 8 out of 10 children are optimistic about their future and anticipate improvement. In West Europe only 1 child out of 2 thinks their life will get better in the future.

▶ Despite experiencing greater fear of external threats and perceiving their rights as less guaranteed, girls show more optimism about their future compared to boys. However, girls also demonstrate more uncertainty about their future, possibly influenced by conflicting social expectations and pressures related to gender roles, which can create mixed feelings about what lies ahead.

▶ Children with migrant backgrounds, those identified as having disabilities, and particularly those from low socioeconomic backgrounds express significantly higher levels of uncertainty and negativity about their future compared to their peers. This suggests that their current circumstances, compounded by experiences of cumulative discrimination, profoundly impact their capacity to envision and aspire to improve their future conditions.

▶ 3 children out of 10 believe that in their future they will not be able to freely decide whether to marry or have children.

▶ In Central and West Africa, the proportion of children expecting to complete their studies drops to 74% (compared to 82.4 % in the overall sample).

▶ Children belonging to minorities hold less optimistic expectations regarding non-discrimination, with only 67.3% expecting not to be treated differently from others in the future, compared to 80.4% of non-minority children.

SHAPING THE FUTURE

In the final stage of the consultation, we asked children to identify priorities for intervention and specify actions adults should take to ensure a better future for them. This phase concluded by directly giving voice to the children, allowing them to share their testimonies, propose solutions, and express their dreams, fears, and expectations for the future.

▶ The highest priority issues adults should intervene on include education, health and access to care, meeting basic needs, combating all forms of violence, and the climate crisis.

▶ In Central and West Africa, more children perceive it as a priority that no child is forced to abandon their home or community.

▶ In East and South Africa, a higher percentage of children identify not having to live in war or conflict as a priority.

▶ In East Asia and the Pacific, there is a significant increase in the priority placed on children being able to surf the internet safely and on the importance of safeguarding the environment.

▶ In Latin America, there is an overall increase in the percentage of children identifying almost all listed interventions as priorities. Notably, children in Latin America identify that preventing violence or maltreatment of children is a top priority.

▶ Such differences in identifying priorities underscore the importance of recognizing and addressing the unique context and needs of children in different regions. Tailoring interventions to fit these regional priorities is crucial for effectively improving the well-being and future prospects of children globally.

From the analysis of more than 8,500 open-ended testimonies, five priority requests from children and adolescents have emerged:

▶ **IMPROVE ACCESS AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS**

▶ **PROTECT US FROM VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION**

▶ **ASK AND LISTEN TO OUR OPINIONS**

▶ **UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT US**

▶ **ENCOURAGE, GUIDE AND SUPPORT US**

Figure 33
Countries involved in the global consultation
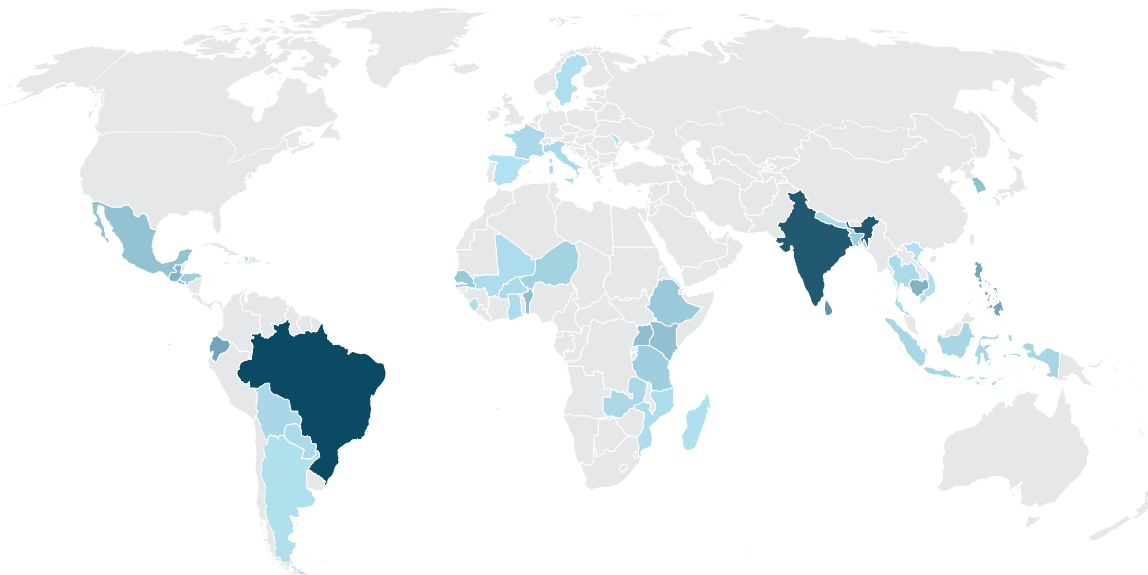
COUNTRY	% ON TOTAL SAMPLE
Argentina	0.35
Bangladesh	2.14
Benin	3.50
Bolivia	1.02
Brasile	16.47
Burkina Faso	0.61
Cambogia	5.02
Ecuador	6.40
El Salvador	2.66
Etiopia	2.51
Francia	0.81
Gambia	0.91
Ghana	0.55
Guatemala	4.71
Haiti	0.53
Honduras	2.06
India	14.96
Indonesia	1.19
Italia	0.83
Kenya	3.33
Corea del Sud	3.31
Libano	0.75
Madagascar	0.20
Mali	0.51
Messico	3.19
Moldavia	0.23
Mozambico	0.59
Nepal	0.61
Niger	1.52
Paraguay	0.60
Filippine	6.15
Senegal	2.46
Sierra Leone	0.34
Spagna	0.13
Sri Lanka	8.18
Svezia	0.38
Tanzania	1.95
Thailandia	0.61
Uganda	3.66
Vietnam	0.26
Zambia	0.97

3.2.1 Getting to Know the Sample

More than 11,000 children and adolescents responded to the global consultation. The raw data from over 11,000 children and adolescent respondents were cleaned to make the surveyed sample more responsive to the demographics of the country (see the methodological note in the Appendix). The cleaned dataset comprises responses from 10,000 children and adolescents across 41 countries (Figure 33). For analysis purposes, these countries were categorized into eight geographic areas (Figure 34), aligning with those used in the World Index calculation (Chapter 2 and Appendix). Notably, two of these geographic areas consist of only one country each: East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova) and Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)[26].

Figure 34
The geographic areas

AREA	% OF INTERVIEWED CHILDREN ON TOTAL SAMPLE
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	0.2
Central and West Africa	8.3
East and South Africa	17.7
East Asia and Pacific	20.1
Latin America and Caribbean	13.8
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	0.8
South Asia	35.7
West Europe and Other States*	3.3

*In the following pages it will be identified only as "West Europe."

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26 It is important to highlight that in other countries within these designated geographic areas where the Alliance operates, conducting the consultation was not feasible due to high-risk conditions prevailing there at the time. This limitation underscores the challenging operational environments in certain regions, impacting the inclusivity of the consultation process.

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CHILDFUND ALLIANCE GLOBAL CONSULTATION ON THE RIGHT TO THE FUTURE   CHILDFUND ALLIANCE WORLD INDEX ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL IDENTITY

The ChildFund Alliance World Index evaluates the implementation of women's and children's rights globally, highlighting the vulnerabilities and marginalization they often face to address these inequalities. However, a limitation of this Index—and other similar synthetic indexes—is that it relies on national data, which averages the experiences of the reference population.

This approach tends to overlook the diversity within social groups (such as women and children), thereby oversimplifying their varied experiences and the different forms of discrimination and intersectional violations they might encounter. **This consultation aimed to explore these diverse experiences by considering factors such as gender, age, language and/or religious minority status, disability, origin, migration background, socioeconomic status, and more.**

We asked participants a series of questions to better understand their social backgrounds, life experiences, and circumstances. The sample comprised 53% boys and 47% girls (Figure 35). Some respondents identified as non-binary. Although their experiences were reported qualitatively to respect their stories and avoid rendering them invisible, the number of non-binary individuals in the sample was too small to include in the analysis of results. The average age of respondents in the sample is 14 years old. To facilitate the presentation of results, the sample was divided into two age groups: pre-adolescents, who make up 44% of the total, and adolescents, who make up 56% (Figure 36). Girls are slightly older than boys: in fact, the average age of boys is 13.9 years, while that of girls is 14.2.

6% of the sample identify as a person with disabilities (Figure 37).
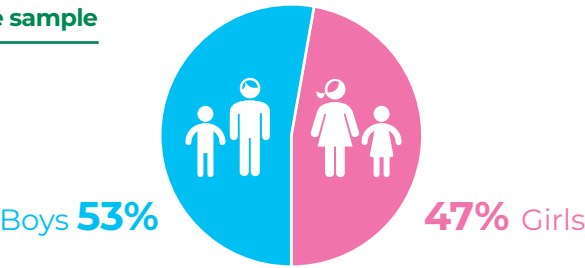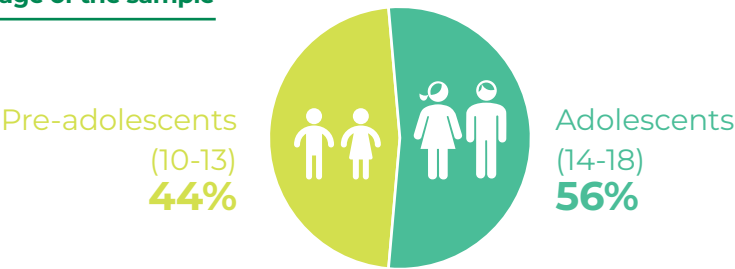
Figure 35
The gender of the sample

Boys **53%**   **47%** Girls

Figure 36
The age of the sample

Pre-adolescents (10-13) **44%**   Adolescents (14-18) **56%**

Figure 37
Children who identify as a person with disabilities

AREA	% OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES
General sample	6.1
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	8.7
Central and West Africa	7.8
East and South Africa	8.1
East Asia and Pacific	5.7
Latin America and Caribbean	4.3
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	5.3
South Asia	5.9
West Europe	3.6

28% of the sample belongs to a linguistic minority, speaking a language different from the national majority. Similarly, 21% identified as part of a religious minority, practicing a faith different from that of the majority. By combining these responses, we created a variable to identify children belonging to either a linguistic or religious minority (Figure 38).

44% of the sample report belonging to a native, indigenous or aboriginal community. Such a high membership rate could be related to a broad concept interpretation. For this reason, the question was not aggregated into the variable "minority membership" (see the methodological note in the Appendix for more information).

Jake Lyell Photography

Figure 38
Children who belong to a linguistic or religious minority

AREA	% OF CHILDREN
General sample	38.5
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	8.7
Central and West Africa	32.1
East and South Africa	27.8
East Asia and Pacific	49.2
Latin America and Caribbean	28.2
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	4
South Asia	44
West Europe	40.2

Figure 39
Children who have a migration background

AREA	% OF CHILDREN
General sample	11
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	30.4
Central and West Africa	8.9
East and South Africa	6.4
East Asia and Pacific	3.4
Latin America and Caribbean	8.6
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	1.3
South Asia	2.4
West Europe	23.7

11% of the sample has a migration background (Figure 39). This classification was determined by combining responses to two questions: whether the child was born in a country different from their current residence, or if their parents or guardians were born elsewhere. Notably, Moldova shows a particularly high percentage of children from migration backgrounds, largely due to ChildFund Alliance's efforts in the country, particularly in assisting refugees who fled following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Similarly, West Europe also exhibits a significant proportion of children from migrant backgrounds, reflecting the Alliance's extensive engagement in fragile contexts, especially with second-generation children.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Next, we asked the sample several questions to better understand their social conditions.

Responses show that 7.8% of the sample do not attend school regularly, with notable geographic differences (Figure 40).

Significant differences were also found in the social profiles of the children surveyed and their school attendance. Irregular school attendance is more prevalent among adolescents, with a reported rate almost double that of pre-adolescents: 9.6% versus 5.5%. It is also more common among girls than boys, with 8.9% of girls and 6.9% of boys reporting irregular attendance.

Children with a migration background and those belonging to native, indigenous, or aboriginal communities also show higher rates of irregular school attendance. Among children with a migration background, 11.3% do not attend school regularly, compared to 7.6% of those without a migration background. For children from native, indigenous, or aboriginal communities, 9.6% report not attending school regularly, compared to 6.9 % of their counterparts.

The most significant disparity in school attendance is seen among children with disabilities: 15.3% of them do not attend school regularly, compared to 7.4% of children without disabilities.
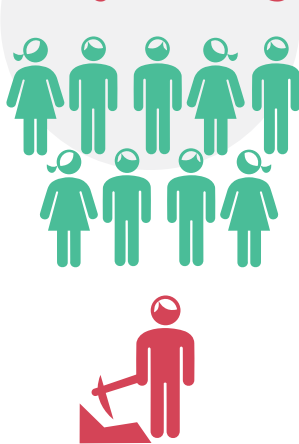
From this set of questions, it also emerged that 9% of the overall sample is currently working, with significant regional differences (Figure 41). Notably, there is a difference between the two age groups: 6.3% of pre-adolescents report working, which may constitute child labor since they are under 14 years old, while this figure rises to 11% among adolescents.

There are other notable differences worth mentioning. The percentage of children who report currently working is higher among boys than girls: 10.3% compared to 7.5%. Similarly, those belonging to a minority group tend to work at a higher rate: 11.2% versus 7.5%. This trend is also observed among those from native, indigenous, or aboriginal communities: 10.9% report working, compared to 6.9%

More than **1 in 7 children with disabilities** report **not attending school** regularly

In Central and West Africa, almost **1 in 3 children** say they **do not go to school regularly**

Almost **1 in 10 children** among the respondents say they **are currently working**

Children who declare to work now

AREA	% OF CHILDREN WHO SAY THEY NOW WORK	% OF CHILDREN WHO PREFER NOT TO ANSWER
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	0	0
Central and West Africa	13.5	0.2
East and South Africa	8.7	0.6
East Asia and Pacific	6.3	2
Latin America and Caribbean	10.1	2
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	4.0	0
South Asia	9.2	0.6
West Europe	9.9	1.5

of those who do not belong to these communities.

Children and adolescents were then asked about their material well-being: if they had a school uniform or clothes in good condition, adequate school supplies, and if they felt satiated after meals. The findings reveal that more than 1 in 7 children (14.8%) lack these basic necessities and do not feel full after every meal.

It should also be noted that the lack of school supplies or clothes in good

condition is closely related to school attendance (Figure 42). Although there is no direct causal relationship, **it can be observed that children who have these necessities are more likely to attend school.**

> I can't go to school because I don't have clothes to wear.
> (Boy, 15, Lebanon)

More than **1 in 7 children** among the respondents **do not have clothes** in good condition, do not have **school supplies**, and do not **feel full** after every meal

Figure 40
Children's school attendance

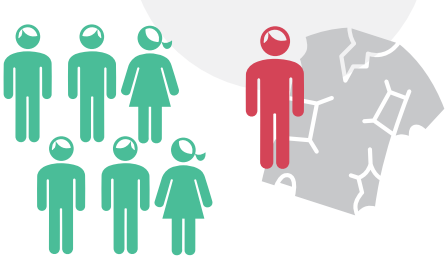| AREA	% OF CHILDREN WHO SAY THEY DO NOT GO TO SCHOOL REGULARLY	% OF CHILDREN WHO PREFER NOT TO ANSWER
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	8.7	0
Central and West Africa	31.8	0.1
East and South Africa	9.8	1.4
East Asia and Pacific	2.9	0.6
Latin America and Caribbean	1.2	1.2
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	4.0	0
South Asia	4.3	0.6
West Europe	2.1	4.5

Figure 42
School attendance and material well-being

AREA	% OF CHILDREN WHO GO TO SCHOOL REGULARLY	% OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE A SCHOOL UNIFORM OR CLOTHES IN GOOD CONDITION	% OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE SCHOOL SUPPLIES
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	91.3	91.3	100
Central and West Africa	68.0	47.4	49.2
East and South Africa	88.8	78.1	78.9
East Asia and Pacific	96.5	87.5	93.7
Latin America and Caribbean	90.0	88.2	89.3
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	96.0	77.3	74.7
South Asia	95.1	90.0	85.3
West Europe	93.4	85.9	94.3

Focusing on children's food insecurity (Figure 43), it is significant to note that it increases dramatically among children with disabilities, affecting nearly 1 in 4 (23%) compared to 14% of those who do not have a disability. Similarly, food insecurity is higher among children with migrant backgrounds, affecting more than 1 in 4 (26%) compared to 14% of those without migrant backgrounds.

Furthermore, as part of the inquiry into children's material well-being, a question about internet access was included. While not traditionally classified as a basic necessity, it enables access to essential rights such as information and education. As early as 2011, the United Nations Special Rapporteur called for access to the internet for all, stating the internet boosts economic, social and political development and contributes to the progress of humankind as a whole. When asked about their access to the Internet, 44.4% of children reported not having it, revealing substantial regional variations (Figure 44).

By aggregating items concerning material well-being (school supplies and clothes availability) and food security with school attendance, a variable was created to identify the socioeconomic status of the respondents[27]. Based on the responses, a low socioeconomic status is identified if the child reported not going to school regularly and/or not having school supplies, and/or not having clothes in adequate condition, and/or not feeling full after each meal. **This analysis revealed that 28.9% of the overall sample, or more than 1 in 4 children, have low socioeconomic status**, with significant geographic differences (Figure 45).

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27 The items on Internet access and children's work were not considered in the formulation of this variable because the internal consistency of the other items increased without them. See the methodological note in the Appendix.

Figure 43
Children's food security

AREA	% OF CHILDREN WHO DO NOT FEEL FULL AFTER EVERY MEAL	% OF CHILDREN WHO PREFER NOT TO ANSWER
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	0	0
Central and West Africa	41.4	3.3
East and South Africa	17.8	5.5
East Asia and Pacific	6.2	4.5
Latin America and Caribbean	25.7	4.6
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	6.7	2.7
South Asia	8.4	1.2
West Europe	10.2	3.0

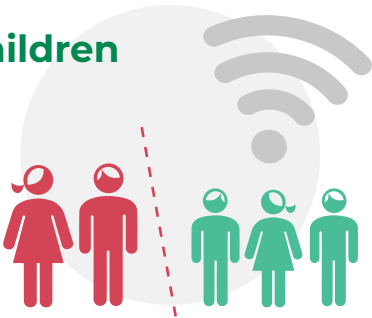More than **2 out of 5 children** among the respondents **do not have access to the Internet**

Figure 44
Children without an Internet connection

AREA	% OF CHILDREN WHO SAY THEY HAVE NO INTERNET CONNECTION
General sample	44.4
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	8.7
Central and West Africa	84.7
East and South Africa	64.6
East Asia and Pacific	28.0
Latin America and Caribbean	31.2
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	45.3
South Asia	43.3
West Europe	3.3

Figure 45
Children with low socioeconomic status*

AREA	% OF CHILDREN WITH LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS
General sample	28.9
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	8.7
Central and West Africa	71.3
East and South Africa	37.9
East Asia and Pacific	17.5
Latin America and Caribbean	35.8
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	26.7
South Asia	18.9
West Europe	25.8

*Children who report not going to school regularly and/or not having school supplies and/or not having clothes in good condition and/or not feeling full after each meal.
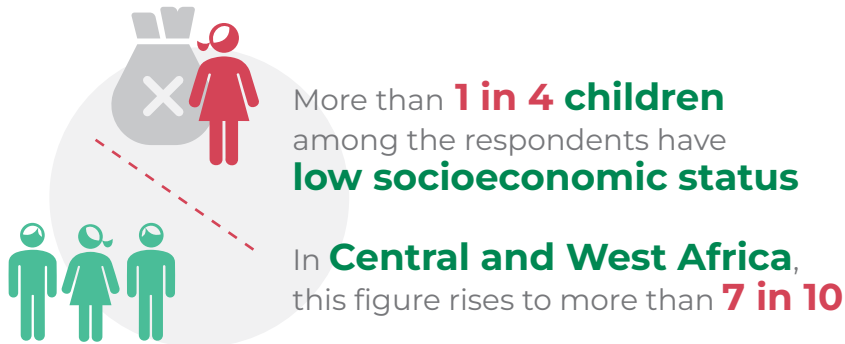
Figure 46
The social identities of children with low socioeconomic status

CHILDREN	% OF CHILDREN WITH LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS
Boys	51.5
Girls	48.5
Adolescents	60.8
Pre-adolescents	39.2
Children who identify as a person with disabilities	9.5
Children with a migration background	8.4
Children belonging to a minority	35.3
Children belonging to a native, indigenous or aboriginal community	49.0

We need help not to be marginalized in society because no child deserves what happened to us.
(Girl, 16, Mali)

Figure 47
Children who do not feel happy

AREA	% OF CHILDREN WHO SAY THEY DO NOT USUALLY FEEL HAPPY
General sample	12.0
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	4.3
Central and West Africa	35.7
East and South Africa	13.2
East Asia and Pacific	9.1
Latin America and Caribbean	10.3
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	32.0
South Asia	7.7
West Europe	9.9

More than **1 in 4 children** among the respondents have **low socioeconomic status**

In **Central and West Africa**, this figure rises to more than **7 in 10**

The socioeconomic status deteriorates for certain demographic groups. **Specifically, it worsens for boys, adolescents, and those belonging to minorities or native, indigenous or aboriginal communities** (Figure 46). Among those with low socioeconomic status, 15.1% report that they are currently working. **Of significant concern is that 26% of these working children are pre-adolescents.**

To conclude the characterization of the sample, children and adolescents were asked about their overall happiness. More than 1 in 10 children (12%) indicated that they generally do not feel happy, and 5.4% chose not to answer the question. Geographic variations were particularly notable (see Figure 47). The region with the highest rates of unhappiness aligns with areas marked by severe material deprivation, food insecurity, and the highest proportion of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds: Central and West Africa.

When examining internal differences within different segments of the sample, adolescents appear less happy compared to pre-adolescents (13.4% of adolescents usually report not feeling happy, compared to 9.9% of pre-adolescents). Additionally, girls express less happiness than boys across both age groups (13.9% of girls do not feel happy compared to 10.1% of boys). This gender disparity persists even when considering that the female sample is slightly older than the male sample, affecting both pre-adolescent girls and adolescent girls (Figure 47).

Parents must take responsibility for our rights. But since they are poor, they can't do anything to improve our living conditions.
(Girl, 17, Mali)

Jake Lyell Photography

> The level of happiness is positively correlated with both school attendance and food security, indicating that children who attend school regularly, and feel full after each meal, tend to be happier.

Significant differences also emerge among children with disabilities, where 17.5% usually do not feel happy, compared to 11.5% of those who do not have a disability. Similarly, among children with migrant backgrounds, 19.1% report not usually feeling happy, contrasting with 11.5% of those without such backgrounds. Furthermore, those belonging to native, indigenous, or aboriginal communities also indicate higher levels of unhappiness compared to those who do not belong to these communities (14.6% vs. 11.4%, respectively). Conversely, children

belonging to linguistic or religious minorities appear slightly happier (84.3% report feeling happy regularly, compared to 81.7% of those not belonging to a minority). This difference may stem from the supportive community structures often found within minority groups, which foster a sense of belonging and solidarity. **Access to education not only fosters cognitive development but also establishes a sense of normalcy and routine that contributes to emotional well-being.** Children who attend school regularly have increased opportunities for academic success and for forming positive relationships with peers and teachers, factors that can enhance their overall happiness.

The level of happiness correlates positively with both school attendance and food security, indicating that children who attend school regularly, and feel full after each meal, tend to be happier.

Regular school attendance provides children with a stable and structured environment for learning, socializing, and developing essential life skills.

ChildFund Japan in Nepal: Protection and Participation of Children in the Creation of their Future

ChildFund Japan (CFJ) in Nepal supports children, families, and communities in vulnerable and marginalized conditions through holistic, inclusive and sustainable solutions.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that children and adolescents should be considered as subjects of rights, while recognizing the right of children to access health and education services, and to be protected against economic exploitation, and from performing any work that is likely to interfere with the child's education or health.

Some of the major problems CFJ has witnessed as being the greatest threats that jeopardize children's right to a future are caused by climate change, as millions of children live in areas highly vulnerable to natural disasters.

Other challenges children face include lack of access to social protections such as health services and education, increased risk of harm online, migration and rising inequality, political instability, and conflict—all of which constitute major threats to children's rights. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these threats.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATION

Children's participation is a key component in all the projects CFJ implements. Under the *'Education for Hope' project*, children-led *Child Protection Policy and Procedures* was presented at the municipality-level exhibition dedicated to child rights and eventually endorsed by the municipal authorities.

'Promoting Safety and Equality in Schools' is another project that empowers and engages students to prevent and respond to school related gender-based violence (GBV). The project encourages them to participate and spearhead activities in schools and communities addressing various forms of social issues as well as GBV.

Jeni Tamang is the chairperson of her school's Child Club and passionately advocates for a child safe and child-friendly environment within the school and community she lives in.

> *"I am delighted to get opportunities to lead the rally on the occasion of 16th days of activism against gender-based violence organized by the Child Club in collaboration with the project."* - Jeni

"CONFIDENT SABINA, HAPPY SABINA!"

The *'Securing Access to Education' Project* aims to empower children through participatory activities, enabling them to explore their passions and career interests and develop life skills such as communication, leadership, and mentorship.

Sabina, a 15-year-old girl, is a young project leader in a patriarchal community where she acts as a role model to many girl children. She inspires and motivates them through organizing capacity building sessions for the Child Club members in schools and communities. Sabina expresses the transformative process she has experienced to be able to lead and facilitate interventions in her schools and community. She shares her story that the project has given her a life-time opportunity through which she is guided to explore areas of different levels of participation and steer her interests in designing creativities that fit well within the community to advocate for girls' rights to education.

She says that school leaders should create schools to be friendly and make them a safe learning space so that each child gets an equal opportunity to develop their personality and is able to excel in their academic performance.

> *"In my community, girl's education is not a priority. However, I want to motivate girls so that they are able to continue education and achieve their aspirations."* - Sabina

The correlation between happiness and food security is notably strong (Figure 48). Children who feel satiated after each meal not only have their nutritional needs met but also benefit from improved energy levels and concentration, crucial for academic performance and overall well-being. **Food security reduces anxiety and stress associated with hunger, enabling children to concentrate better on daily activities and experience a higher quality of life.**

Figure 48
The correlation between happiness and food security
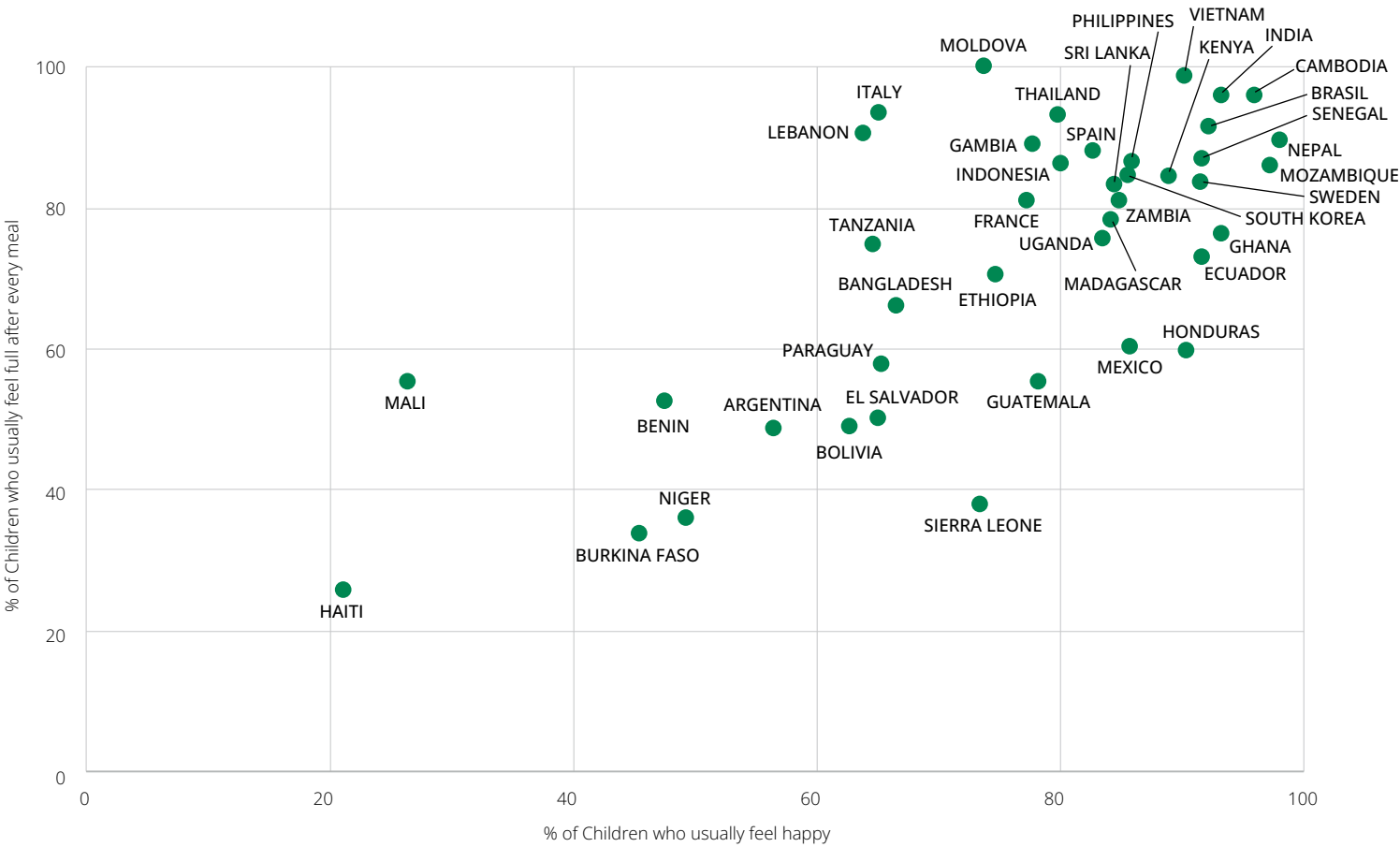
% of Children who usually feel full after every meal (y-axis)
% of Children who usually feel happy (x-axis)

ChildFund Deutschland in Ethiopia: Environmental Protection Group

ChildFund Deutschland is a child protection organization that has been working on the improvement of future opportunities of children in need, their families, and their entire environment on an international scale since 1978. Through various development cooperation and humanitarian aid projects, we aim to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families.

In recent years, the world has changed drastically, leading to new conditions and challenges for children around the world. For example, as the effects of climate change are progressing, long-lasting periods of drought, heavy floods, and heat waves pose a growing threat to children and their rights. The consequences range from crop failures to dried-up rivers, which have a severe negative impact on children's development. The lack of access to clean water as well as malnutrition and undernourishment negatively affect their health and education, leading to diminished prospects and opportunities for the future.

Our approach is based on the principle of helping people to help themselves so that they can lead a self-determined and independent life. Therefore, ChildFund Deutschland puts great emphasis on the beneficiaries' participation.

An impressive example of the active involvement of children is the work at the Beseka Primary School in Elala Kebele, Ethiopia. The small village in the lowlands near the capital Addis Ababa repeatedly struggles with droughts. The soil is dry and due to deforestation, exposed to the sun. Many people hardly know anything about how they can contribute to preserving their environment. But environmental protection groups at schools – such as the one at the Beseka School in the Fentale district – are raising people's awareness for that topic.

With the support of ChildFund Deutschland, the schoolchildren can turn their ideas into reality. Seeds, fertilizer, shovels, and other tools enable them to grow tree seedlings – something the whole community benefits from. The pupils are changing mindsets, raising awareness about composting, and working to eliminate plastic waste. What these schoolchildren have already achieved through their tireless commitment is remarkable. Thanks to the efforts of the environmental protection group at Elala Kebele and similar groups at other schools, more than 80,000 seedlings have already been grown and planted over the past two years.

"Until we had a workshop on environmental protection, we didn't know what we as children could achieve. Thanks to the support of ChildFund Deutschland, we were able to buy seeds, fertile soil, and other materials. More and more people have become involved in our project, which is really great. We are incredibly proud of how much we have achieved in such a short time. And I can well imagine that we can achieve even more. Our school is now a green paradise, which is also used by the whole community." - Biliftu, Head of the Environmental Protection Group at Beseka School.

70   71

CHILDFUND ALLIANCE GLOBAL CONSULTATION ON THE RIGHT TO THE FUTURE   CHILDFUND ALLIANCE WORLD INDEX ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

3.2.2 Children's and Adolescents' Rights at Present

This second part of the consultation focuses on the current status of children, their rights, the challenges they face, and instances of rights violations, as well as the role of adults in safeguarding their rights.
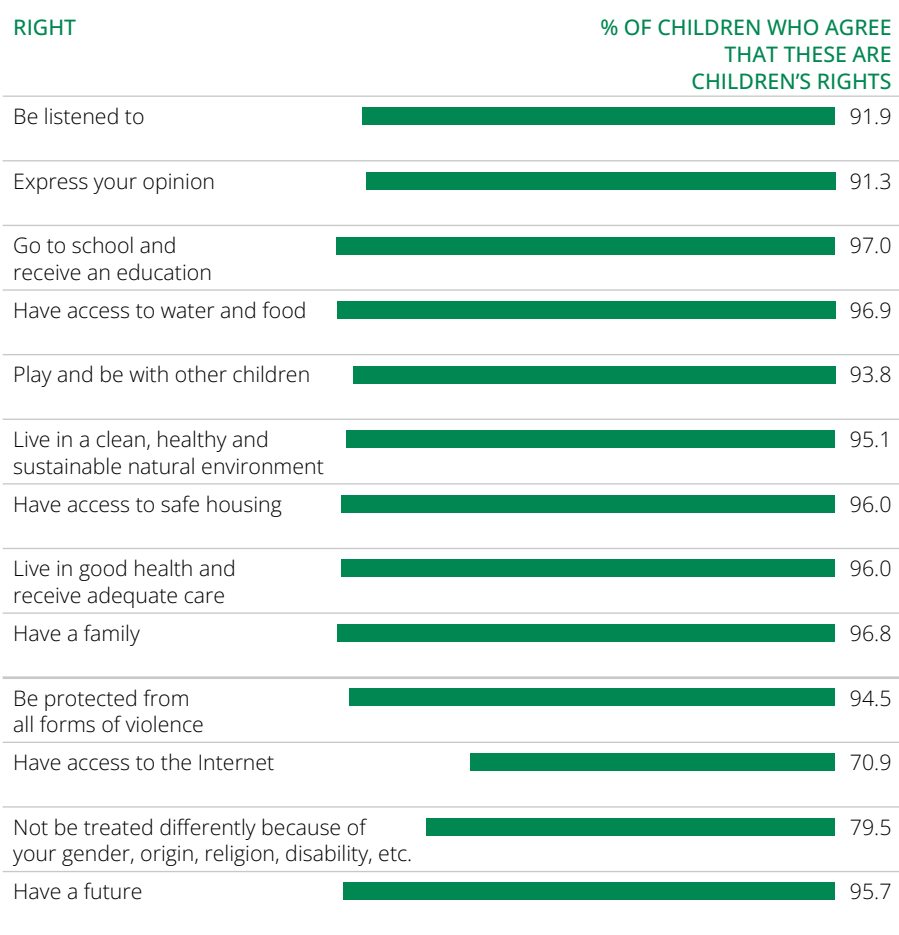
RECOGNIZING ONESELF AS A RIGHTS HOLDER

After identifying the sample, our next step was to **assess whether children and adolescents perceive themselves as rights holders**. We achieved this by posing a series of questions regarding rights outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which are recognized as children's rights.

Specifically, children were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the recognition of these rights (Figure 49).

95.7%

More than
95% of children
surveyed believe that
**the right to the future
is a children's right**
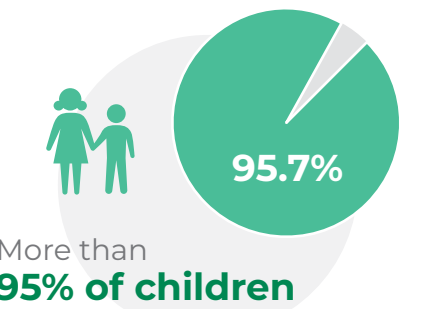
Looking at the overall sample, the agreement percentage—indicating recognition of the items listed as children's rights—is generally above 90%. However, there are notable exceptions: the right to access the internet receives 70.9% approval, meaning that 3 in 10 children do not consider it their right, and the right to non-discrimination garners 79.5% agreement, indicating that 2 in 10 do not recognize it as a children's right. The right with the highest recognition is the right to education, acknowledged by 97% of surveyed children.

Figure 49
Children's recognition of children's rights

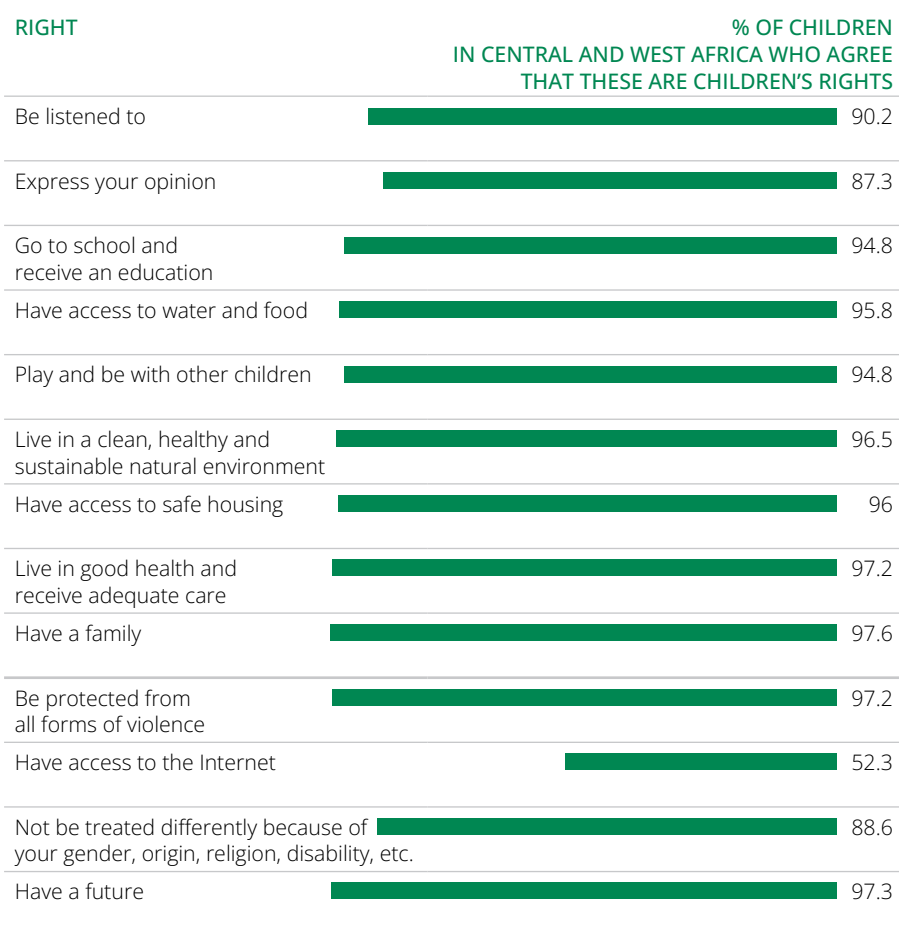| RIGHT	% OF CHILDREN WHO AGREE THAT THESE ARE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
Be listened to	91.9
Express your opinion	91.3
Go to school and receive an education	97.0
Have access to water and food	96.9
Play and be with other children	93.8
Live in a clean, healthy and sustainable natural environment	95.1
Have access to safe housing	96.0
Live in good health and receive adequate care	96.0
Have a family	96.8
Be protected from all forms of violence	94.5
Have access to the Internet	70.9
Not be treated differently because of your gender, origin, religion, disability, etc.	79.5
Have a future	95.7

In general, Central and West Africa report lower agreement rates among children regarding recognition of rights compared to other geographic areas (Figure 50). However, it is noteworthy that for certain rights, such as the right to non-discrimination (88.6% agreement) and the right to the future (97.3% agreement), the percentage of agreement in Central and West Africa surpasses the average of the general sample. **Particularly striking is the high agreement rate for the right to the future in this region, despite Central and West Africa being identified by children themselves as facing greater deprivation and rights violations.**

When examining differences among different segments of the sample, girls express stronger agreement regarding the right to express their opinion, with 92.4% of girls agreeing compared to 90% of boys across both age groups. Similarly, a similar pattern is observed for the right to non-discrimination, recognized by 81.4% of girls compared to 77.8% of boys.

Children who identify as having disabilities show lower recognition rates for the right to the future and the right to express their opinion. Specifically, 7.5% of children with disabilities do not recognize the right to the future, compared to 4.2% of those who do not have a disability. Similarly, 9.6%

Figure 50
Children's recognition of children's rights in Central and West Africa

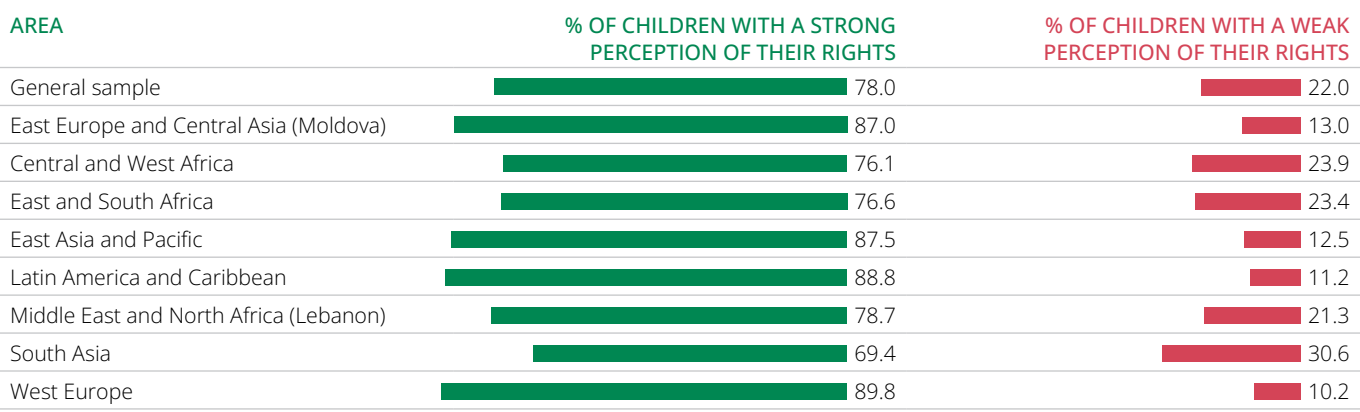| RIGHT	% OF CHILDREN IN CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA WHO AGREE THAT THESE ARE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
Be listened to	90.2
Express your opinion	87.3
Go to school and receive an education	94.8
Have access to water and food	95.8
Play and be with other children	94.8
Live in a clean, healthy and sustainable natural environment	96.5
Have access to safe housing	96
Live in good health and receive adequate care	97.2
Have a family	97.6
Be protected from all forms of violence	97.2
Have access to the Internet	52.3
Not be treated differently because of your gender, origin, religion, disability, etc.	88.6
Have a future	97.3

of children with disabilities do not recognize the right to express their opinion, slightly higher than the 8.6% among children who do not have a disability.

In general, **children from low socioeconomic backgrounds show lower agreement in recognizing the listed items as children's rights, particularly those related to child participation**. For instance, while 93.4% of those not from a low socioeconomic background recognize the right to express their opinion, only 85.9% from low socioeconomic backgrounds do so. Similarly, the right to be listened to receives less agreement: 88.2% among those from a low socioeconomic background compared to 93.4% among those not from such backgrounds.

Combining these observations, **a rights perception variable was created to measure the strength of children's perceptions of their rights** (see the methodological note in the appendix for details).

Jake Lyell Photography

Figure 51

Perceptions of children's rights in different geographic areas

AREA	% OF CHILDREN WITH A STRONG PERCEPTION OF THEIR RIGHTS	% OF CHILDREN WITH A WEAK PERCEPTION OF THEIR RIGHTS
General sample	78.0	22.0
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	87.0	13.0
Central and West Africa	76.1	23.9
East and South Africa	76.6	23.4
East Asia and Pacific	87.5	12.5
Latin America and Caribbean	88.8	11.2
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	78.7	21.3
South Asia	69.4	30.6
West Europe	89.8	10.2

More than
1 in 5 children have a
**weak perception
of their rights**
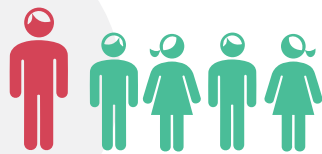
Figure 52

**Children's perception of their rights
according to their social identity and condition**

CHILDREN	% OF CHILDREN WITH A WEAK PERCEPTION OF THEIR RIGHTS
Boys	22.5
Girls	20.7
Adolescents	20.7
Pre-adolescents	22.8
Children who identify as a person with disabilities	25.0
Children who do not identify as a person with disabilities	21.4
Children with migrant background	18.2
Children with no migrant background	21.8
Children belonging to a native, indigenous or aboriginal community	17.4
Children who do not belong to a native, indigenous or aboriginal community	23.8
Children belonging to a minority	21.0
Children who do not belong to a minority	22.1
Children with low socio-economic status	30.1
Children with higher socio-economic status	18.2

The analysis shows that 78% of the sample has a strong perception of their rights, while the remaining 22% have a weak perception, with significant geographic variations (Figure 51). **Regions with lower perceptions of rights among children include South Asia (where 30.6% of children have a weak perception), Central and West Africa (23.9%), and East and South Africa (23.4%).**

Significant differences related to the social identity of respondents are evident (Figure 52).

A detailed analysis reveals that boys tend to have weaker perceptions of their rights compared to girls. This difference may be influenced by factors such as gender socialization and cultural expectations that affect awareness and assertion of rights.

Furthermore, there is a noticeable distinction between pre-adolescents and adolescents. Pre-adolescents, likely due to their lower maturity and life experience, exhibit a weaker perception of their rights compared to adolescents, who tend to develop greater awareness and critical thinking skills as they approach adulthood.

The perception of rights is notably weaker among children with disabilities or those from marginalized socioeconomic backgrounds. These social groups encounter discrimination and barriers that may diminish their sense of empowerment and awareness of their rights.

The most significant difference pertains to children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Within this group, 30.1% of respondents exhibit a weak perception of their rights, in contrast to 18.2% among those not from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background. This disparity suggests that economic and social marginalization could diminish awareness of personal rights. Economic hardships and limited access to education and information may contribute to reduced knowledge and assertion of one's rights. Consequently, it can be hypothesized that vulnerability and marginalization adversely impact children's recognition of themselves as right-holders.

Interestingly, children with a migrant background, as well as those belonging to native, indigenous, aboriginal, or minority communities, demonstrate a stronger perception of their rights. This phenomenon may be linked to intricate processes of identity recognition. Experiences of migration and adaptation often heighten awareness of rights as essential tools for protection and inclusion. Within indigenous and minority communities, there exists a tradition of intergenerational transmission of values and a history of advocating for rights, which fosters heightened awareness. Moreover, historical experiences of discrimination in these communities sometimes cultivate a collective consciousness centered on the pursuit of equality. This collective consciousness might incentivize a more acute perception of rights, viewed as crucial instruments for defending cultural identities.

Economic and social marginalization could diminish awareness of personal rights

ChildFund Alliance

Un Enfant par la Main in Madagascar: Capacity Strengthening for Children to Claim their Rights

Founded in 1990, Un Enfant par la Main (UEPLM) is an international solidarity association, and a member of the ChildFund Alliance network. It has been active in Madagascar since 2018 where it is currently implementing projects in the field of education, health, nutrition, WASH, protection, and agricultural development.

UNICEF's latest HAC (Humanitarian Action for Children) reminds us that, according to forecasts, 2.3 million people, including 1.7 million children, will need humanitarian aid in 2024 due to climatic phenomena (prolonged drought, recurrent floods, cyclones and epidemics).

Every year, Madagascar is hit by increasingly powerful and long-lasting cyclones. These phenomena further weaken household food security, particularly during the hunger gap, which grows longer every year. The nutritional situation of children is very precarious and structurally fragile. The latest baseline survey for Madagascar Demographic and Health Survey in 2021 reveals that 40% of children under 5 suffer from stunted growth. The Central Highlands have the highest prevalence, and the Analamanga region is not spared from this scourge. It affects 48% of children under the age of 5.

At the end of 2018, **Un Enfant par la Main launched the VAHATRA program in partnership with Amadea.**

Adopting the rights-based approach, the program's actions aim to sustainably improve the living conditions of children and families in the districts of Ambohidratrimo and Ankazobe (Analamanga region).

In order to combat the specific problem of malnutrition during the lean season, and in response to local demand, Un Enfant par la Main and its partner Amadea set up a school canteen model based on short supply circuits in 13 schools in the communes of Antanetibe Mahazaza and Fihaonana. Every year since 2019, nearly 2,000 children receive varied daily meals made with local produce. **The results have shown that the school canteen can be an effective lever in the fight against school absenteeism during food shortages.**

One of the underlying causes of malnutrition at the household level is poor eating habits, the fundamental cause of which is the population's low level of education and information on the subject. UEPLM therefore organizes nutrition education sessions for parents, teachers, members of farming groups and local authorities, alongside the canteens.

Adopting a rights-based approach, the program's actions also aim to strengthen the capacities of rights-holders, e.g., children. UEPLM has set up clubs in schools, aimed at raising awareness and building the capacity of children to claim their rights. Each session with the clubs addresses a specific theme (right to food and nutrition, to a healthy school environment, to education, etc.), but also cross-cutting themes like climate change. Local and international partners have developed child-friendly tools about nutrition, which Un Enfant par la Main use to raise awareness of the importance of dietary diversity.

The project takes advantage of key dates to raise community awareness of children's rights. Each year, the clubs actively prepare activities to celebrate Children's Month in Madagascar (June) and the International Day of Children's Rights (November). A performance is put on by the children who are members of the clubs: composition and rehearsal of plays or speech contests (kabary malagasy), video, sketches, etc. Emphasis is placed on the right to nutrition and health, to encourage behavioral change within communities and to combat malnutrition.

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN AND THE INFRINGEMENTS UPON THEIR RIGHTS

The consultation then investigated the current state of realization and potential violations of children's rights. We asked respondents to indicate whether they encounter issues in their daily lives that could be considered violations of children's rights.
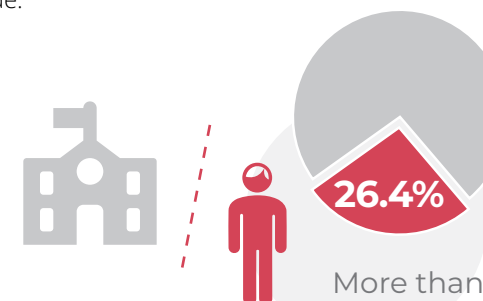
Across the overall sample, the most commonly reported issues by children include:

39%
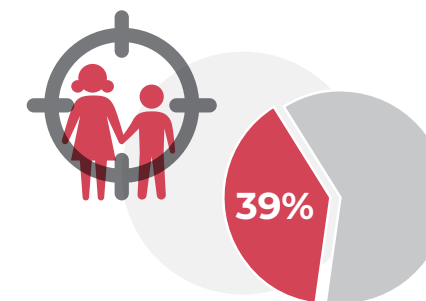
39% of children report feeling **unsafe** due to wars and crime

32.3%
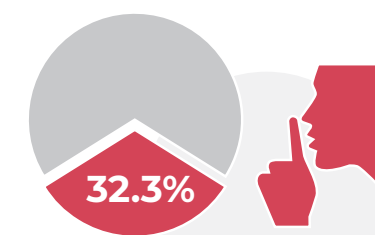
Approximately **32.3% of children** indicate that **adults do not seek their opinion**

26.4%

More than **26.4% of children** state they **do not** always have the opportunity to **attend school**

25%

25% of children report that **adults** say or do things that **make them feel bad**

Promoting a culture of listening and participation and educating both children and adults about the significance of dialogue can enhance decision-making quality and bolster social unity.

There are, however, notable variations in the issues experienced across different geographic regions (Figure 53). In all regions examined, a common problem is that adults seldom seek children's opinions, potentially violating their rights to be heard and participate as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent.

During the administration of the questionnaire, it became apparent that many children were unfamiliar with the concept of "opinion." Upon clarification, it became evident that they are rarely, if ever, consulted by adults in their communities. This lack of dialogue can detrimentally impact their growth by limiting opportunities to express themselves and feel valued. It also hampers their active involvement in decisions affecting them, fostering a sense of exclusion.

Promoting a culture of listening and participation and educating both children and adults about the significance of dialogue can enhance decision-making quality and bolster social unity. Neglecting to seek children's opinions represents a breach of their rights and overlooks a chance for their personal development and societal progress.

When I grow up, I will be listening to children and asking for their opinions.
(Girl, 14, Kenya)

Educo in the Philippines: Children as Agents for Social Transformation (CAST) Project

educo Member of ChildFund Alliance

EDUCO CHAMPIONS THE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN

ChildFund Alliance member Educo is known in the Bicol region and throughout the Philippines for championing children's rights, especially the right to child participation. It has produced several child leaders who have been instrumental in sharing their experiences and amplifying the voices of their communities. The organization has supported numerous child participation initiatives, including the development of the Child Participation Guidelines in the Philippines, and providing resources and sending child leaders to the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC). These leaders have contributed to the creation of guidelines for duty bearers to ensure meaningful child participation across the country.

EMPOWERED MARINHEL TAKES THE LEAD

Marinhel, a fifteen-year-old child leader, is an active member of the Barangay Children's Organization (BCO), a platform dedicated to nurturing children's voices, advocating for their rights, and fostering their skills. Initially reserved and hesitant to engage beyond school and immediate surroundings, Marinhel's journey transformed after joining Educo projects. She blossomed from a timid participant to a confident contributor in discussions and activities within her community.

Marinhel's journey began with one of the learning sessions of the Child-Friendly Local Governance Project in 2021, where she actively contributed ideas on children's rights and well-being. Presently, Marinhel holds a significant role as the regional and national representative of the children's basic sector at the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC). In this capacity, she passionately advocates for poverty reduction programs and ensures that children's voices are heard and prioritized in national platforms.

At present, Marinhel and her fellow officers within the Barangay Children's Organization are engaging with both government officials and their local communities. They facilitate dialogues with duty bearers and government officials, acting as representatives for children, especially those who cannot speak up for themselves.

"I want to inspire others to speak for themselves, because, as a child, I also want them to be inspired to express their voices and share their opinions so that they can be heard." - Marinhel

In addition, Educo has so far successfully organized 59 Barangay Children's Organizations (BCOs) with a membership of 396 children across the five covered municipalities in Bicol. Furthermore, it has facilitated the formation of 5 Municipal Children's Federations (MCFs) and thirty-eight successful child-led projects.

THREATS HINDERING CHILD PARTICIPATION

Violence against children significantly hinders meaningful participation and prevents children from raising their voices. Cases of violence pose a threat to child participation due to safety concerns, which undermines their ability to engage confidently.

Health crises are another major threat, such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which drastically affected children's participation. During the pandemic, children were confined to their homes, and incidents of domestic violence increased as a result of lockdown measures.

To address these challenges, it is crucial to establish and maximize enabling mechanisms that ensure children can fully participate even during health crises. Creating safe, supportive, and accessible platforms for children to voice their opinions and engage in decision-making processes is essential for their continuous and meaningful participation, regardless of external circumstances.

Figure 53
Problems and rights violations that children encounter in their lives

(The first three responses are reported in order of selection*)

AREA	MAIN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	% OF CHILDREN WHO AGREE
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	Wars and crime don't make me feel safe	47.8
	I was forced to abandon my home or community	21
	Adults don't ask my opinion	17
Central and West Africa	Adults don't ask my opinion	48.7
	I don't always have access to food water and care	47.5
	I don't always have the opportunity to go to school	47.2
East and South Africa	Wars and crime don't make me feel safe	53.5
	Adults don't ask my opinion	38.2
	I don't always have the opportunity to go to school	33.3
East Asia and Pacific	Wars and crime don't make me feel safe	43.8
	Adults do or say things that make me feel bad	25.7
	Adults don't ask my opinion	25.4
Latin America and Caribbean	Wars and crime don't make me feel safe	48.7
	I don't always have the opportunity to go to school	30.8
	Adults don't ask my opinion	28
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	Wars and crime don't make me feel safe	46.7
	I don't always have the opportunity to go to school	45.3
	Adults don't ask my opinion	45.3
South Asia	Adults don't ask my opinion	31.5
	I feel alone and not listened to	24
	When I'm on the internet, strangers try to contact me	21.7
West Europe	Wars and crime don't make me feel safe	24.3
	Adults don't ask my opinion	21.6
	Adults do or say things that make me feel bad	20.4

* The complete list of items listed included: I do not always have the opportunity to learn and go to school; wars and/or crime in my country do not allow me to feel safe and secure; I am treated differently from other children or adults because of my gender, origin, religion, ethnicity, disability, etc. I don't always have access to food and water and I don't have everything I need to be well; I don't always have access to health care and medicine when I am sick; I have been forced to leave my home or community of origin; Adults around me may do or say things that make me feel bad; When I am on the Internet, people I don't know bother me, send me messages, or try to contact me in other ways; When I am on the Internet, other children make fun of me; I feel lonely and unheard; Adults around me don't ask for my opinion.

Regarding differences among segments of the sample, **girls are more likely than boys to report that adults do not ask for their opinion** (34.2% of girls compared to 30.7% of boys) **and that they feel alone and not listened to** (24.7% of girls compared to 21.3% of boys).

Girls **34.2%**

Boys **30.7%**

34.2% of girls surveyed indicate that **adults do not ask their opinion**, compared to **30.7% of boys**
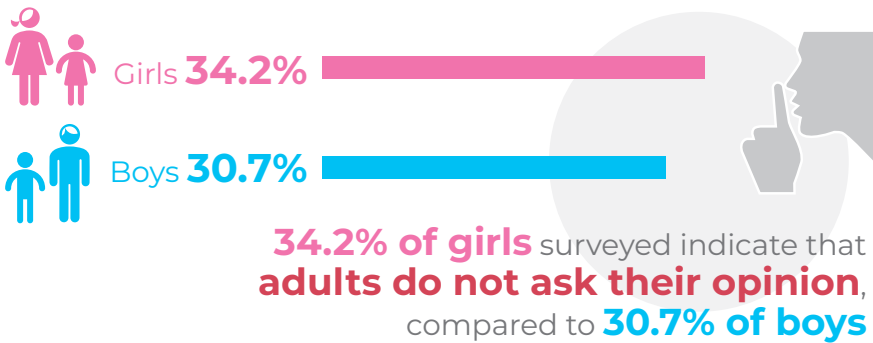
ChildFund Korea: a Safe Digital Environment for Children

ChildFund Korea

Since 1948, ChildFund Alliance member ChildFund Korea has been operating as an organization promoting and advocating for children's happiness and sound growth. Through their strong domestic network, including 20 regional headquarters and seven welfare centers, six family foster care support centers, five child protection agencies and four directly operated institutions, they care for and support children as the leading child welfare organization in Korea. ChildFund Korea also supports children around the world to grow up healthy in a safe environment, free from disasters and threats.

One of the biggest threats to child rights that ChildFund Korea has identified is the 'increasing risk of children in digital environments'. During the spread of the COVID-19 virus, as more children came into contact with the digital environment, children's personal information infringement, cyber bullying, and sex crimes escalated.

ChildFund Korea has initiated a variety of advocacy activities in response, drawing on advice from ChildFund Korea's Children Group. This group, which has been in operation since 2023, is a child participation organization comprising 156 people from 8 regions across the country. The group carries out advocacy activities to improve and enact laws and policies necessary to promote rights.

The Internet and social media are a new play environment for children, exposing them to many risks, including bullying from their peers when they choose not to use it. But children in this environment are also exposed to predatory risks, dangerous and age-inappropriate content and misinformation. ChildFund Korea is raising the voice of children to digital platform convenors, asking: "Please recommend a video suitable for our age, develop a filtering technology that deletes profanity and swear words, and permanently delete accounts suspended due to illegal activities."

In 2024, ChildFund Korea will also present various opinions, especially focusing on Korea's major digital platforms, to create a safe digital platform with Children. These child-participating activities will give time to children for thinking about the digital environment in terms of children's rights and to consider solutions.

(Girl, 15, Korea — workshop photo with Korean banners: "아동의 안전한 디지털 플랫폼 개선을 위한 아동 참여 워크숍")

46.2% of children with disabilities feel they are **treated differently** from other children, compared to **19.9%** of those who do not have a disability

46.2%
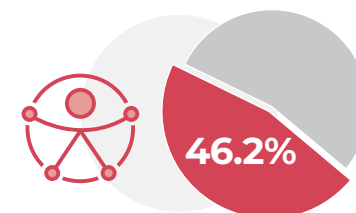
In general, children who identified as persons with disabilities report lower agreement percentages across all items, suggesting heightened exposure to violations of their fundamental rights. Specifically, there is a significant disparity regarding non-discrimination: 45.7% of children with disabilities agree that they are treated differently due to their gender, origin, disability, etc., compared to 19.9% of those without disabilities. There is also a notable difference concerning adults asking for their opinion: 46.2% of children with disabilities state that adults do not seek their opinion, whereas the value drops to 31.5% for children without disabilities.

When examining children with migrant backgrounds, several rights violations become apparent. Specifically, 32.6% of these children report that they do not always have the opportunity to attend school, compared to 26.1% of those without a migrant background. Additionally, 22% of children with a migration background report being forced to leave their home or community, a higher percentage than the 15.6% among those without a migration background. Furthermore, 29.3% of children with a migrant background feel alone and not listened to, compared to 22.5% of those without such a background.

Children belonging to linguistic or religious minorities also face notable disparities in the realization of their rights. Particularly striking is that 38.2% of them agree that adults do not ask for their opinion, compared to 28.6% among those who do not belong to a minority. Similarly, 28.7% of minority children feel alone and not listened to, compared to 19.3% of non-minority children.

Disparities are also evident in the life experiences of children belonging to native, indigenous, or aboriginal communities. A significant 39.8% of these children report that adults do not seek their opinion, compared to 27.6% of those who do not belong to these communities. Additionally, 32% of children from native, indigenous, or aboriginal communities state they do not always have the opportunity to attend school, compared to 23.2% of their counterparts who do not belong to these communities.

These findings highlight that child facing multiple forms of discrimination due to their social identities, as well as those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, encounter greater obstacles in having their rights respected and fulfilled. This includes children from migrant backgrounds, those with disabilities, and those living in precarious economic conditions. These groups often struggle more to access educational, health, and social opportunities. Cumulative discrimination and systemic barriers restrict their ability to fully enjoy their rights, compromising their well-being and overall development.

DO ADULTS GUARANTEE AND PROMOTE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS?

Once we identified the most prevalent rights violations and issues children face, we sought to gauge their perceptions of adult actions—the primary duty bearers in their lives.

Children were asked a series of questions to assess to what extent adults in their lives (including parents, teachers, relatives, and community leaders) ensure their fundamental rights. Generally, **the areas where adults least frequently or never fulfill their roles include ensuring access to the internet (consistent with data on internet access reported earlier in the survey and in the World Index), seeking children's opinions, and treating them according to principles of equality** (Figure 54). Notably, apart from the right to internet access, the right least often championed by adults pertains to soliciting children's opinions, consistently ranking among the three least assured rights across all geographic regions.

Women should be given the chance to express themselves and their needs and feelings should be heard.
(Girl, 17, Tanzania)

In my opinion, adults or people should give us "opportunities", and by this, I mean teach us and help us put it into practice. Promote discovering of our talents and exploiting them, since we all have different talents or gifts, whatever you want to call it, but even if we know it, we don't exploit it or we don't know how.
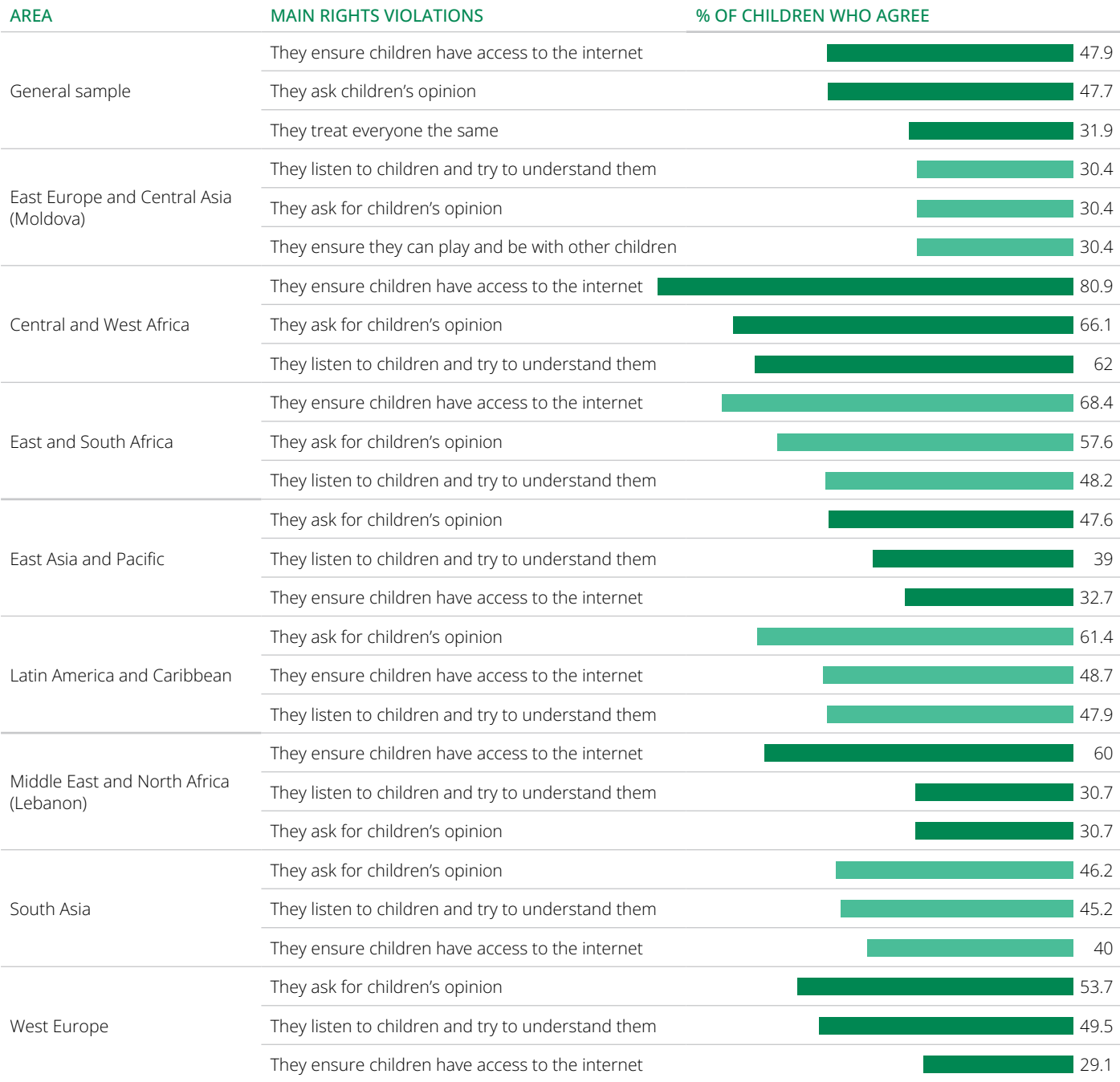*(Girl, 15, Bolivia)*

Significant variations between geographic regions also emerge. Central and West Africa stand out once again as the region where basic rights are most lacking and where children perceive adults as least promoting their rights.

Nearly **1 in 3 children** surveyed across 41 countries report that **adults do not treat all children equally**

Children's rights that adults do not promote according to children in different geographic areas

(The first three responses are listed in order of selection)

AREA	MAIN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	% OF CHILDREN WHO AGREE	
General sample	They ensure children have access to the internet		47.9
	They ask children's opinion		47.7
	They treat everyone the same		31.9
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	They listen to children and try to understand them		30.4
	They ask for children's opinion		30.4
	They ensure they can play and be with other children		30.4
Central and West Africa	They ensure children have access to the internet		80.9
	They ask for children's opinion		66.1
	They listen to children and try to understand them		62
East and South Africa	They ensure children have access to the internet		68.4
	They ask for children's opinion		57.6
	They listen to children and try to understand them		48.2
East Asia and Pacific	They ask for children's opinion		47.6
	They listen to children and try to understand them		39
	They ensure children have access to the internet		32.7
Latin America and Caribbean	They ask for children's opinion		61.4
	They ensure children have access to the internet		48.7
	They listen to children and try to understand them		47.9
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	They ensure children have access to the internet		60
	They listen to children and try to understand them		30.7
	They ask for children's opinion		30.7
South Asia	They ask for children's opinion		46.2
	They listen to children and try to understand them		45.2
	They ensure children have access to the internet		40
West Europe	They ask for children's opinion		53.7
	They listen to children and try to understand them		49.5
	They ensure children have access to the internet		29.1

* The complete list of items listed included: Ask their opinion; Listen to them and try to understand them; Ensure that they go to school and get an education; Ensure that they can play and be with other children; Ensure that they live in a clean, healthy and sustainable natural environment; Ensure that they have access to safe housing; Protect their health and provide the care they need when they are sick; Ensure that they have a family; Protect them from any violence and mistreatment; Ensure that they have access to the Internet; Treat everyone equally, regardless of their gender, origin, religion, ethnicity, disability, etc. They are committed to ensuring a better future for them.
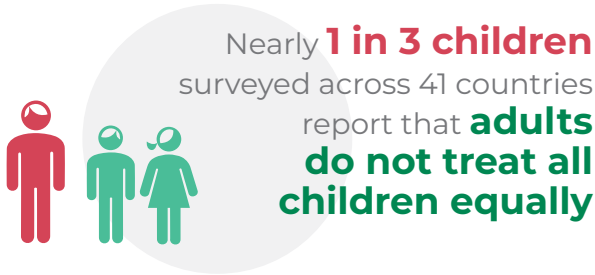
In Central and West Africa, **2 out of 3 children** report that **adults do not ask their opinion**
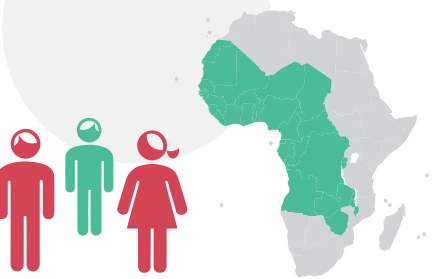
Examining different segments of the sample reveals that, overall, girls tend to report more negative responses than boys. Specifically, 27.4% of girls indicate that adults never or only sometimes ensure they get to play with other children (compared to 25.4% of boys). Additionally, 53.2% of girls state that adults never or only sometimes ask their opinion, while 51.5% of boys report the same.
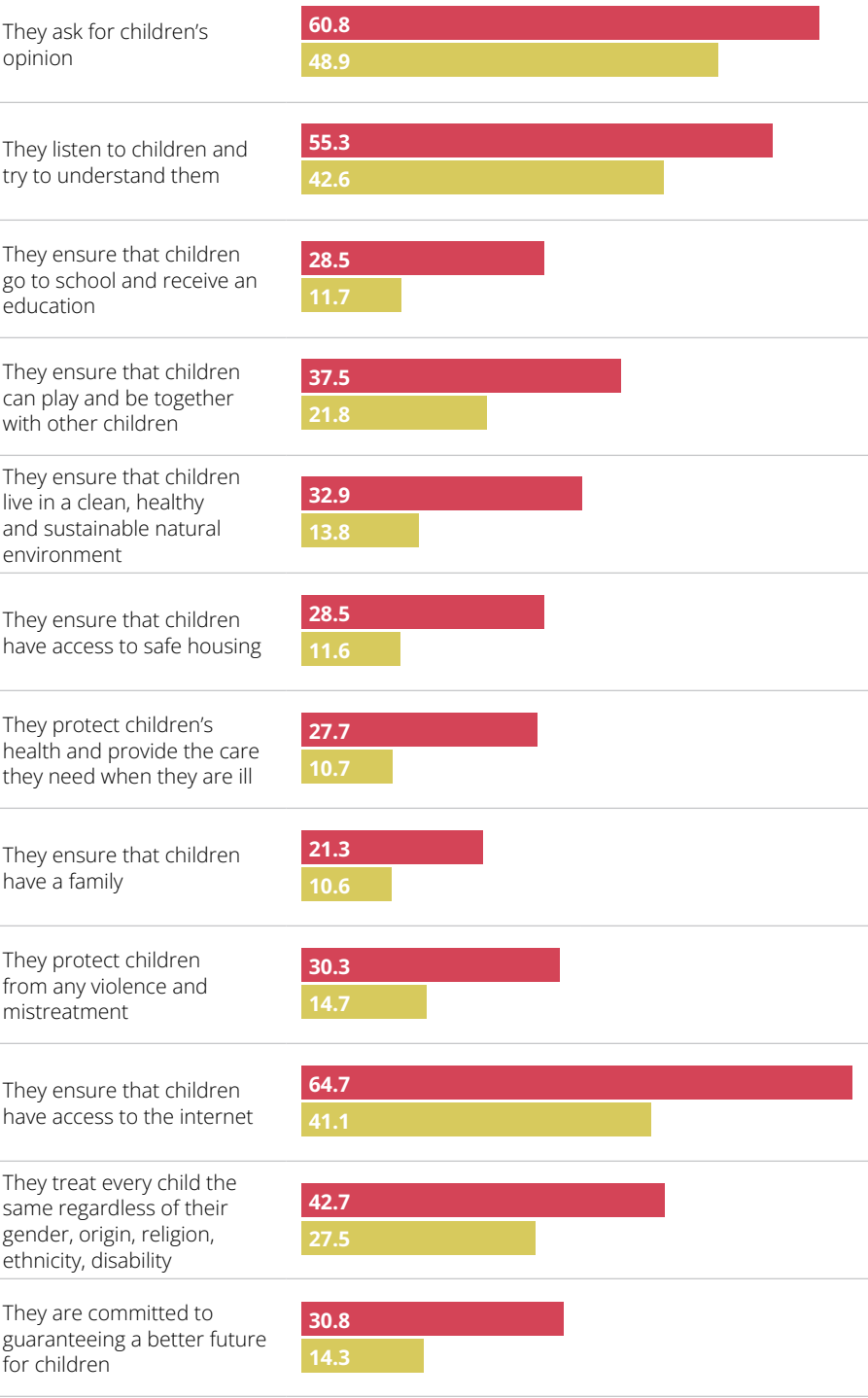
26.3% of children who identify as having a disability report that adults almost never or only rarely protect them from abuse and mistreatment, compared to 18.8% of those without a disability. This disparity is particularly notable in regions such as Central and West Africa, East and South Africa, and South Asia. Another significant difference concerns children with a migration background: 34.4% of them state that adults do not treat them the same as other children, compared to 31.7% of those without a migrant background.

However, when examining children with low socioeconomic status, differences emerge across virtually all aspects (Figure 55).

It is enough for the adults around me to encourage me to move forward in life.
(Boy, 11, India)

Children's rights adults do not promote according to children with low socioeconomic status

DO ADULTS AROUND YOU DO THESE THINGS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH?

	LOW	NO LOW
They ask for children's opinion	60.8	48.9
They listen to children and try to understand them	55.3	42.6
They ensure that children go to school and receive an education	28.5	11.7
They ensure that children can play and be together with other children	37.5	21.8
They ensure that children live in a clean, healthy and sustainable natural environment	32.9	13.8
They ensure that children have access to safe housing	28.5	11.6
They protect children's health and provide the care they need when they are ill	27.7	10.7
They ensure that children have a family	21.3	10.6
They protect children from any violence and mistreatment	30.3	14.7
They ensure that children have access to the internet	64.7	41.1
They treat every child the same regardless of their gender, origin, religion, ethnicity, disability	42.7	27.5
They are committed to guaranteeing a better future for children	30.8	14.3

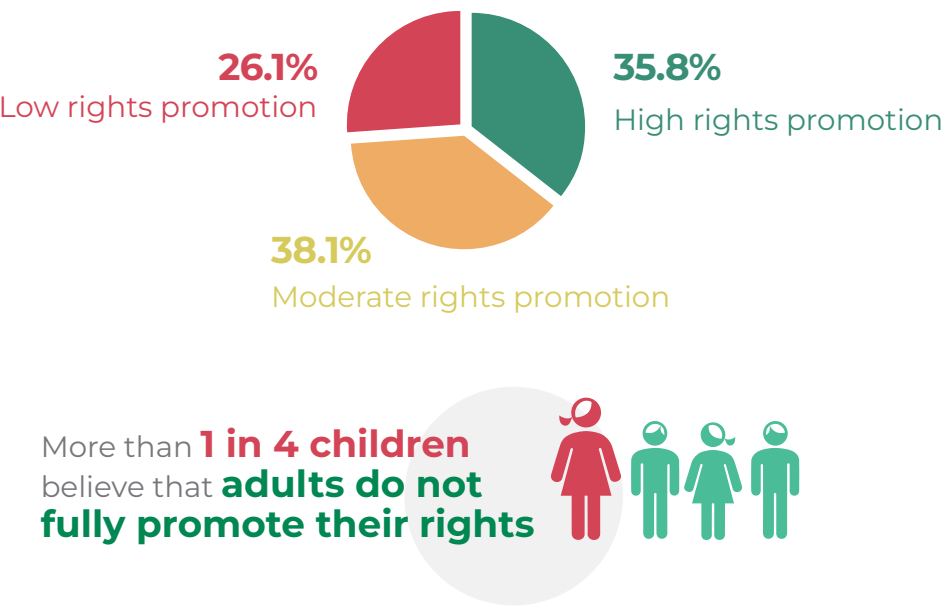**% OF CHILDREN WITH LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS WHO REPLIED SOMETIMES OR NEVER**

% OF CHILDREN WITH NO LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS WHO REPLIED SOMETIMES OR NEVER

Similarly to the rights perception variable, a variable was created by aggregating children's responses to gauge the promotion of children's rights by adults around them, categorized into high, moderate, or low levels (Figure 56).

Overall, it appears that 35.8% of surveyed children experience high promotion of their rights by adults, 38.1% experience moderate promotion, and 26.1% experience low promotion, with notable geographic variations. Once again, regions such as Central and West Africa, South Asia, and East and South Africa stand out for lower levels of rights promotion by adults (Figure 57), coinciding with areas where children perceive their rights as least respected.

Figure 56
The levels of promotion of children's rights by adults

26.1%
Low rights promotion

35.8%
High rights promotion

38.1%
Moderate rights promotion

More than **1 in 4 children** believe that **adults do not fully promote their rights**

Figure 57
The levels of promotion of children's rights by adults in the different geographic areas

AREA	% OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HIGH RIGHTS PROMOTION	% OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCING MODERATE RIGHTS PROMOTION	% OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCING LOW RIGHTS PROMOTION
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	52.2	34.8	13.0
Central and West Africa	16.6	36.4	46.9
East and South Africa	26.6	35.8	37.6
East Asia and Pacific	47.1	34.0	18.9
Latin America and Caribbean	35.0	41.3	23.7
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	54.7	36.0	9.3
South Asia	37.9	41.0	41.0
West Europe	40.2	36.0	23.7

Examining the differences within the sample segments reveals several noteworthy trends. Children identifying as having disabilities tend to experience lower promotion of rights by adults, with 31% of them perceiving this compared to 25.7% of children without disabilities.

Another significant contrast appears among children from low socioeconomic backgrounds: 43.2% of them perceive low promotion of their rights by adults, contrasting sharply with 19.1% of those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

An interesting observation links the promotion of children's rights by adults with children's happiness levels. **Notably, 56.5% of children who do not usually feel happy report low promotion of their rights by adults, in contrast to 20.2% of those who usually feel happy.**

Lastly, a positive correlation emerges between children's perception of their rights and the actual promotion of these rights by adults. Living in environments where rights are effectively recognized and upheld by duty bearers significantly influences children's self-perception as rights-holders. This fosters trust in institutions and society, enhancing their psychological well-being, sense of security, and confidence. Conversely, inadequate promotion of rights can lead to feelings of disillusionment and detachment from duty bearers, undermining children's perception of their legitimate rights. Therefore, investing in actively promoting children's rights not only enhances their identity and self-esteem but also cultivates a fairer, more inclusive environment conducive to their holistic development.

Barnfonden: Empowering Youth for a Sustainable Future

Climate change is not only disrupting children's lives now but is also affecting their future opportunities. Barnfonden, ChildFund Alliance's member in Sweden, adopts a rights-based perspective, **empowering young people to become visionary forces in their communities.** By supporting youth groups, they can hold duty bearers—parents, teachers, and government and traditional leadership structures—accountable for enacting change.

Bangladesh, one of the world's most climate-affected countries, frequently experiences natural disasters. Barnfonden and Alliance member Educo in Bangladesh tap into the energy and social capital of young people by supporting local partner organizations to establish youth-led Climate Change Adaptation and Environmental Stewardship clubs, known as 'YES4ECO Clubs.' These clubs build young people's concepts, capacity, connections, and leadership confidence. Members learn about climate change and future planning, including sustainable agriculture, construction, waste management, and becoming more climate-smart. They also inspire peers through social media, drama, and participatory research, educating thousands about the importance of climate action and promoting environmental stewardship.

Each youth group leads climate and environmental action projects based on community vulnerability assessments, such as plastic recycling or starting tree nurseries. YES4ECO Clubs are connected to local and district government structures, giving youth a voice in community decision-making and linking them to national youth-led climate action networks.

This initiative exemplifies **Barnfonden's "Now, Soon, Future" approach**, addressing current concerns while planning for the next five years and the long-term future. Whether in education, health, protection, or livelihood projects, Barnfonden's plans aim to:

► Inform: Educate young people and their families about the science of climate change and its impacts. Engaging educational programs help them become informed advocates for environmental stewardship.
► Prepare: Equip young people with the skills to build resilient communities capable of withstanding climate challenges. This includes, among other things, disaster preparedness and learning sustainable agriculture practices.

► Engage: Amplify children's voices from local to global stages, supporting their advocacy for policies and actions that prioritize environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

A SUPPORTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY

An active civil society is essential to push for new laws, programs, policies, or strategies on climate change. It plays a critical role in holding governments accountable for their commitments, identifying gaps in government responses, and ensuring national policymaking includes the most vulnerable. **ChildFund supports civil society organizations to be effective, influential partners, bridging the gap between the vulnerable and those with the power to enact protective policies against climate change impacts.**

This is most evident in Kenya and Ethiopia, where organizations learn to use a rights-based approach for their climate-affected communities. The Barnfonden-supported *Pamoja: Collective Action on Climate Change* project links CSOs to learn from each other while working with youth and women's groups to identify and plan for change, similar to efforts in Bangladesh, noted above. However, these organizations also share learning and expand their thinking on climate and environmental issues. This approach is extended to work with other ChildFund members in Kenya, where Barnfonden, ChildFund International, and WeWorld-supported projects and partners such as the Organization for Africa Youth – are connecting through coordinated channels, including social media, to promote learning/sharing. This makes our work together more integrated, effective, and impactful.

Genaye Eshetu

Children's Future in the Middle East

Since the events of October 7th, 2023, with the attacks by Palestinian armed groups to Israel and the latter's war on Gaza, violence has spread across the region, affecting not only the occupied Palestinian territory but also Lebanon, worsening the ongoing humanitarian crises in these countries, with devastating consequences for the whole population, and for children in particular.

As of September 2024, at least **13,000 children have been reported killed in Gaza, and thousands more have been injured** (Health Cluster/WHO, 2024). This makes it the deadliest conflict for children in the last four years (UN, 2024a)[28]. With no safe spaces and their basic rights systematically violated, **650,000 students are now deprived of education, along with 45,000 six-year-olds who have been unable to start the first grade this year** (UNICEF, 2024a). Nearly 90% of school buildings have been damaged or destroyed, and no university remains intact (ECW et al., 2024). Without sufficient aid, these children risk to permanently drop out of school, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation, child labor, early marriage, and other forms of abuse.

People in Gaza are surviving on just 3% of the minimum standard for water, while 1.1 million are experiencing catastrophic food insecurity (IPC, 2024). This has led to **an estimated 50,400 children under five suffering from acute malnutrition** (WHO, 2024a). Moreover, repeated mass displacements, the collapse of the health system, critical shortages of medical supplies, and poor water quality and sanitation have significantly **increased the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases, including polio** (WHO, 2024b)[29].

No child in Gaza is free from fear, pain, or hunger. Each one is exposed to the traumatic experiences of war, with lifelong consequences, which are endangering their childhood along with their future. In fact, the impacts of conflict do not end when the attacks stop: they continue to unfold long after[30].
Meanwhile, hostilities in Lebanon have sharply escalated since the Israeli heavy attacks on September 23rd 2024, severely impacting younger generations already grappling with multiple crises, now caught in the middle of war. Between September and October, **more than 100 children have been killed, over 800 injured, and 400,000 displaced** (Associated Press, 2024). Additionally,

1.2 million children are now deprived of education, as public schools have become inaccessible, either damaged by the conflict or repurposed as shelters, with only a few private Lebanese schools still in operation. Water infrastructures have also been targeted: in the first three weeks since the escalation, 26 water stations serving nearly 350,000 people were damaged (ibid.).

ChildFund Alliance responded quickly in Gaza through its Italian member, WeWorld, which has been active in the occupied Palestinian territory since 1992 and in Lebanon since 2006. **WeWorld continues to advocate for the protection and rights of children affected by the conflicts in both countries, working to ensure that children have access to essential resources to survive and thrive in these challenging conditions**[31].

In Gaza, WeWorld continues its emergency operations, focusing on providing lifesaving water, sanitation, and hygiene services, as well as food parcels, to displaced people in camps and scattered communities. To date[32], **it has reached over 639,698 people, most of them children and women**, by distributing safe and sufficient water for domestical and drinking use, constructing and maintaining latrines, providing hygiene kits and non-food items (such as jerry cans, soap, diapers, and sanitary pads), conducting hygiene campaigns, and facilitating environmental cleaning, including waste collection and disposal. Additionally, more than 7,000 families have received food parcels. **These efforts have been concentrated in the most crowded and vulnerable areas, including displacement camps, UNRWA shelters, hospitals, and schools.**

In Lebanon, WeWorld has started responding to the emergency in October 2024, **supporting displaced people in collective shelters, distributing life-saving humanitarian aid** (including food, water for domestic and drinking use, and essential non-food items such as mattresses and hygiene kits). Moreover, due to the shelling and the consequent damage to the water infrastructure, WeWorld's team has started undertaking water network reparations in the Bekaa Valley, to restore access to water for the affected residents. The Organization will also provide food vouchers to conflict-affected residents and deliver immediate assistance to refugees in Syria, including both Lebanese and Syrian nationals.

It is essential that the international community takes decisive actions to end the conflict in the Middle East and prioritize the protection of children. We must collaborate to provide the necessary support for these children to recover from their trauma and rebuild their lives.

Comparing the ChildFund Alliance Global Consultation with the World Index

The Children's Sub-Index, one of the three components of the ChildFund Alliance World Index, evaluates children's human rights implementation across 10 indicators in 5 dimensions — health, education, human capital, economic capital, and violence against children—resulting in a global country ranking.

This level of rights implementation is linked to the responsibilities of duty bearers, such as governments and caregivers. Our research aimed to explore the correlation between children's perceptions of adult-promoted rights and their countries' scores in the Children's Sub-Index.

The findings reveal a positive correlation: countries scoring higher in the Children's Sub-Index also tend to have children who perceive a higher promotion of their rights by adults. This correlation is particularly strong in countries surveyed in South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific.

This underscores the importance of effective rights implementation and adult roles in fostering environments where children's rights are respected. These insights can guide policymakers and organizations in improving children's rights, highlighting the need to address both practical and perceptual aspects to ensure all children enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms.

3.2.3
Imagining the Future

The third part of the consultation focuses on children's perceptions of their future, particularly their ability to envision it. The questions delve into their fears, anxieties, uncertainties, as well as their hopes, expectations, and dreams.
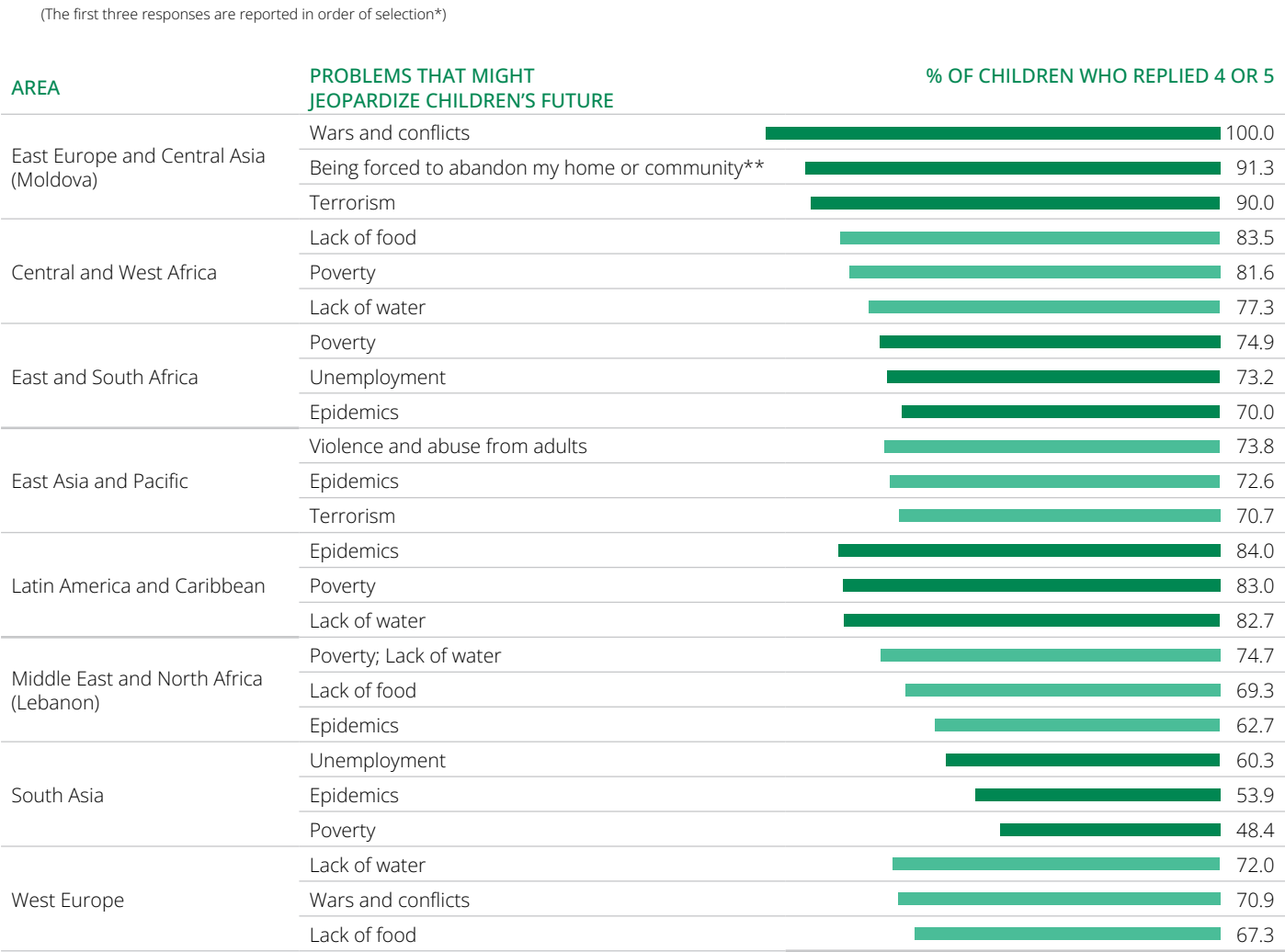
CHILDREN'S FEARS ABOUT THE FUTURE

We asked children to identify the main factors currently threatening their future that frighten them the most. At the overall sample level, the three primary concerns for children are unemployment, which worries 66.3% of respondents, poverty at 65.3%, and epidemics selected by 65.2% of respondents, likely influenced by the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Geographic variations in these concerns also emerge (Figure 58). Children from Moldova are the most concerned about their future, primarily due to fears related to war, conflict, and the possibility of displacement from their homes. Similarly, children from Latin America express heightened worries compared to their peers in other regions, particularly regarding most of the listed concerns.

Examining the differences within the sample segments reveals that girls generally express greater concern about all the listed items, with particular emphasis on poverty, climate change, being forced to leave their home or community, and crime and violence (Figure 59).
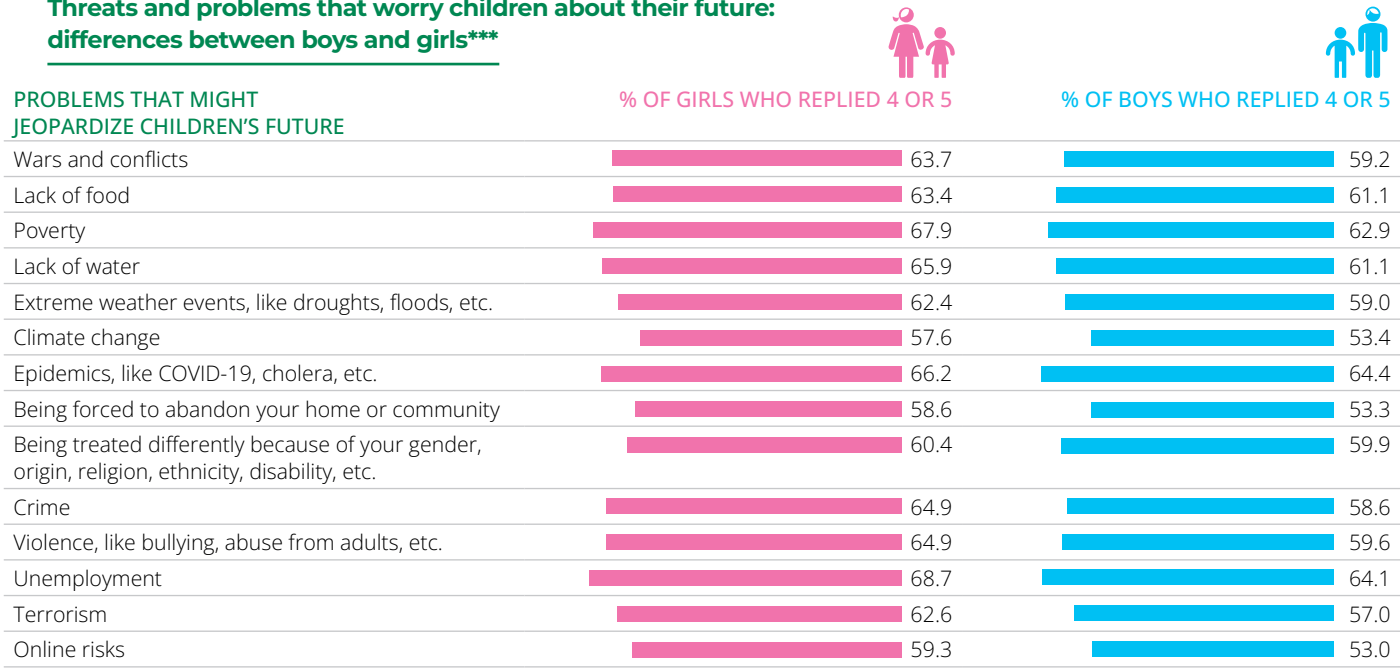
Figure 58

Threats and problems that worry children about their future

(The first three responses are reported in order of selection*)

AREA	PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT JEOPARDIZE CHILDREN'S FUTURE	% OF CHILDREN WHO REPLIED 4 OR 5
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	Wars and conflicts	100.0
	Being forced to abandon my home or community**	91.3
	Terrorism	90.0
Central and West Africa	Lack of food	83.5
	Poverty	81.6
	Lack of water	77.3
East and South Africa	Poverty	74.9
	Unemployment	73.2
	Epidemics	70.0
East Asia and Pacific	Violence and abuse from adults	73.8
	Epidemics	72.6
	Terrorism	70.7
Latin America and Caribbean	Epidemics	84.0
	Poverty	83.0
	Lack of water	82.7
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	Poverty; Lack of water	74.7
	Lack of food	69.3
	Epidemics	62.7
South Asia	Unemployment	60.3
	Epidemics	53.9
	Poverty	48.4
West Europe	Lack of water	72.0
	Wars and conflicts	70.9
	Lack of food	67.3

* Children could assign a score to these items on a scale from 1 (the least worrying) to 5 (the most worrying). The full list of items listed included: Wars and conflicts; Lack of food; Poverty; Lack of water; Extreme weather events; Climate change; Epidemics, like COVID-19, cholera, etc.; Being forced to abandon your home or community; Being treated differently because of your gender, origin, ethnicity, disability, etc.; Crime; Violence, like bullying, abuse from adults, etc.; Unemployment; Terrorism; Online risks.
** Also considered as very worrying by the same percentage of children (91.3%) are: Lack of food, Lack of water, Epidemics, Extreme weather events and Poverty.

Figure 59

Threats and problems that worry children about their future: differences between boys and girls***

PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT JEOPARDIZE CHILDREN'S FUTURE	% OF GIRLS WHO REPLIED 4 OR 5	% OF BOYS WHO REPLIED 4 OR 5
Wars and conflicts	63.7	59.2
Lack of food	63.4	61.1
Poverty	67.9	62.9
Lack of water	65.9	61.1
Extreme weather events, like droughts, floods, etc.	62.4	59.0
Climate change	57.6	53.4
Epidemics, like COVID-19, cholera, etc.	66.2	64.4
Being forced to abandon your home or community	58.6	53.3
Being treated differently because of your gender, origin, religion, ethnicity, disability, etc.	60.4	59.9
Crime	64.9	58.6
Violence, like bullying, abuse from adults, etc.	64.9	59.6
Unemployment	68.7	64.1
Terrorism	62.6	57.0
Online risks	59.3	53.0

*** Children could assign a score to these items on a scale from 1 (the least worrying) to 5 (the most worrying).

ChildFund New Zealand in the Pacific: Community-led Climate Adaptation for Island Resilience Programme

In all their work in the Pacific, ChildFund New Zealand seeks to remove the barriers that prevent children and young people from reaching their potential, getting an education or learning the skills they need to thrive. As a first step, this involves local communities identifying those barriers. Partners in-country then support these local goals This approach promotes the concept of leaving partners and their communities stronger than when ChildFund arrived, seeing the region develop sustainably, lifting its people out of poverty, adapting to climate change, and making sure its young people realise their full potential.

ChildFund New Zealand's work is guided by the principles: locally led problem definition and implementation of solutions, and the importance of measuring and reporting impact so we know we're making a difference. Pacific communities are at the forefront of the global climate crisis, which is creating an increasingly uncertain future for children across the world. Paradoxically, this crisis is making Pacific children's future increasingly certain, as they are already exposed to more frequent extreme weather events, sea-level rise, dramatic increases in heat, and extreme precipitation forecasting and drought. ChildFund New Zealand recently launched the **Community-led Climate Adaptation for Island Resilience Programme** funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The goal is for communities in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Sri Lanka, to increase their resilience to the impacts of climate change with a focus on water and food security. Not having to worry about the basics has a positive correlation for attendance at school and skills-training.
Wide community consultation took place to design this programme. Children and young people were involved to make sure the interventions were targeted in the right places. Their biggest fears were focused on poorer health due to increased dust from ongoing drought, lack of access to clean water or fresh and nutritious food, losing their homes or schools to sea-level rise, having to move away from their villages, their parents losing their jobs, or worse – having a loved one perish in a flash flood or a cyclone. The right to a future for the region looks challenging: it is expected that a baby born this year in Solomon Islands will face 10 times the heat waves and double the risk of flash floods than were experienced by their elders.

Sharon Inone, the young founder and CEO of Greenergy Pacific, ChildFund's partner in Solomon Islands, talks about the changes observed on her Island in Santa Cruz, Temotu Province: *"I remember growing up in my grandfather's house in the village next to the coastline. Within just 20 years, sea level rise had totally eroded the coastline. I watched as my grandfather's house submerged under the waves and salination impacted our traditional wells where we would access fresh water."* Sharon said. She worries that Pacific children are being left behind but is excited and hopeful about the momentum that's building through this new programme.

Through the initial community scoping, baseline data collection, and set up of Community Action Groups with youth representatives, teenage children and youth will be empowered to help define how resources are distributed through this programme. Youth will be supported to become key actors in how to hold their governments accountable for implementing policies to protect their communities, a key element in safeguarding children's rights now and well into the future.

Looking at other social groups, children who identify as having a disability do not show significant differences in their concerns compared to those without disabilities. However, for children with a migration background, notable differences emerge. Specifically, a higher percentage of them express concerns about being forced to leave their home or community (67.7% compared to 55% of those without a migration background), being treated differently (61% compared to 56.2%), and poverty (75% compared to 64.7%).

Similarly, children belonging to linguistic or religious minorities also indicate higher levels of concern across almost all listed items compared to children who do not belong to minorities. This pattern also holds true for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Conversely, the analysis of how adults promote children's rights reveals that children who perceive high levels of rights promotion from adults are generally less anxious about future challenges. This correlation suggests that when children have confidence in responsible adults—such as parents, teachers, and other authority figures— they feel more protected and secure. Adults who actively support children's rights create an environment of trust and safety.

When children see their rights respected and championed, they develop a sense of security that reduces their concerns about external threats. This feeling of protection arises from their belief that trusted adults will defend their rights whenever necessary.

> *When the war ends in my country, I think our lives will be better, but the war has had a lot to do with our lives*
> *(Boy, 14, Mali)*

Additionally, children who do not regularly experience happiness tend to express higher levels of fear compared to their peers. This observation underscores a link between a child's perceived happiness and their sensitivity to fears and uncertainties.

A child's happiness is closely tied to their overall well-being and feelings of security. **When children are happy, they often perceive their surroundings as safer and more predictable, which can decrease their apprehension towards potential threats. Conversely, children who do not frequently experience happiness may view the world as more daunting and unpredictable, heightening their susceptibility to fears and anxieties.**

Therefore, the emotional state of happiness significantly influences how children perceive and respond to threats in their environment.

CHILDREN'S VISION OF THEIR FUTURE

Children were asked to envision potential changes in their circumstances in the future. Despite variations in the realization, protection, and promotion of their rights, **nearly 8 out of 10 children express optimism about their future and anticipate improvement** (Figure 60). This optimism likely stems from their innate resilience, perceived progress within their communities, and the positive influence of educational programs focused on children's rights.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to complement this optimism with concrete actions that secure real and lasting improvements in their lives. **By supporting children's optimism with practical measures, we not only validate their positive outlook but also strengthen their belief in a future where their rights are consistently respected and upheld. Such proactive efforts are vital for nurturing sustained well-being and development among children.**

Figure 60
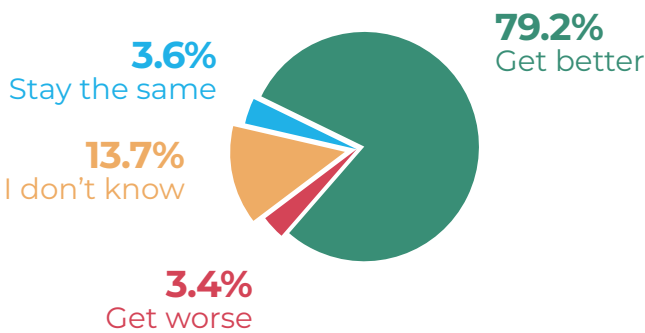**In the future children think their life will...**

- 79.2% Get better
- 3.6% Stay the same
- 13.7% I don't know
- 3.4% Get worse

In West Europe only **1 child out of 2** think their **life will get better** in the future

Figure 61
Children's view of their life in the future in different geographic areas

AREA	GET BETTER	GET WORSE	I DON'T KNOW	STAY THE SAME
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	73.9	0	17.4	8.7
Central and West Africa	71.4	24.9	3.3	0.5
East and South Africa	74.7	11.1	8.5	5.7
East Asia and Pacific	87.9	9.1	1.5	1.5
Latin America and Caribbean	76.1	17.4	4.0	2.5
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	76.0	12.0	10.7	1.3
South Asia	82.3	12.3	3.1	2.4
West Europe	52.0	30.3	9.3	8.4

Notable geographical disparities are found in children's views on their future (Figure 61). Children from East Asia and Pacific exhibit the highest levels of optimism, with 87.9% believing their lives will "get better" in the future. Similarly, in South Asia, 82.3% of children express positive expectations about their future prospects.

Conversely, West Europe stands out with a contrasting perspective, where nearly 1 in 10 children (9.3%) foresee their lives "getting worse" in the future. Moreover, West Europe records the highest degree of uncertainty regarding the future, with 30.3% of children unable to provide a definitive response.

These findings underscore diverse perceptions influenced by regional socio-economic conditions, cultural contexts, and local opportunities for development. Understanding these variations is crucial for tailoring interventions that support children's aspirations while addressing their concerns effectively.

When examining different age groups within the sample, adolescents show a more pessimistic view. While 81.6% of pre-adolescents are optimistic about their future improving, this percentage decreases to 77.4%

among adolescents. This decline in hopefulness can be attributed to various factors. Adolescence is a period marked by significant physical, emotional, and social changes, which can lead to heightened stress and anxiety. These changes may influence how adolescents perceive their future. Moreover, as adolescents become more aware of future responsibilities and societal expectations, they may experience concerns about their ability to achieve personal and social goals. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for providing targeted support to adolescents, addressing their concerns, and fostering resilience during this critical developmental stage.

Despite experiencing greater fear of external threats and perceiving their rights as less guaranteed, girls exhibit more optimism about their future compared to boys. This optimism among girls may stem from a drive for empowerment and overcoming challenges. However, girls also demonstrate more uncertainty about their future, possibly influenced by conflicting social expectations and pressures related to gender roles, which can create mixed feelings about what lies ahead. Conversely, boys tend to hold a more negative outlook on their future. This pessimism may be

linked to societal pressures to adhere to traditional notions of masculinity that emphasize toughness and self-reliance. These expectations can discourage emotional expression and seeking support, contributing to a less hopeful perspective on the future. Understanding these gender dynamics is essential for addressing the unique challenges and aspirations of both boys and girls, ensuring that interventions and support systems effectively promote resilience and well-being across diverse gender identities.

When examining children with migrant backgrounds, those identified as having disabilities, and particularly those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, notable disparities emerge in their levels of uncertainty and negativity regarding the future. These groups tend to express significantly higher levels of uncertainty and negativity compared to their peers without these backgrounds. **This suggests that their current circumstances, compounded by experiences of cumulative discrimination, profoundly impact their capacity to envision and aspire to improve their future conditions.**

When children face multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage, their outlook on the future may narrow and
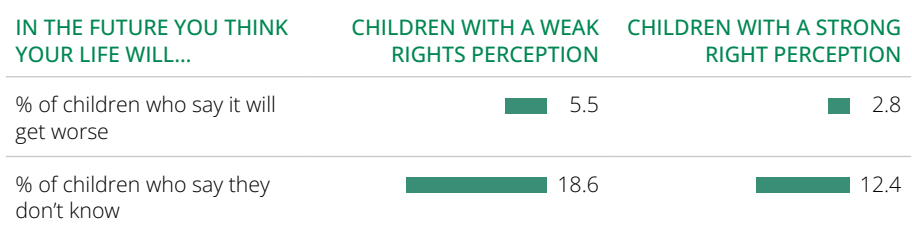
become more pessimistic. **Cumulative discrimination not only affects their present well-being but also undermines their confidence and motivation to pursue a better future.** Recognizing and addressing these discrimination factors is crucial to fostering the future well-being and aspirations of all children, irrespective of their background or circumstances. By addressing these systemic inequalities, we can create environments where every child has the opportunity to envision and strive for a brighter future.

Cross-referencing children's responses to this question with their perceived level of rights reveals a significant correlation: **those who perceive their rights weakly also tend to express greater pessimism or uncertainty about their future.** Recognizing oneself as a rights holder profoundly influences the ability to envision and plan for the future. When children perceive themselves as rights holders, they typically demonstrate greater confidence in their potential for fulfillment and in the support they can expect from society (Figure 62). Conversely, weak perceptions of rights can undermine trust in institutions and diminish future prospects, leading to feelings of helplessness and disillusionment.
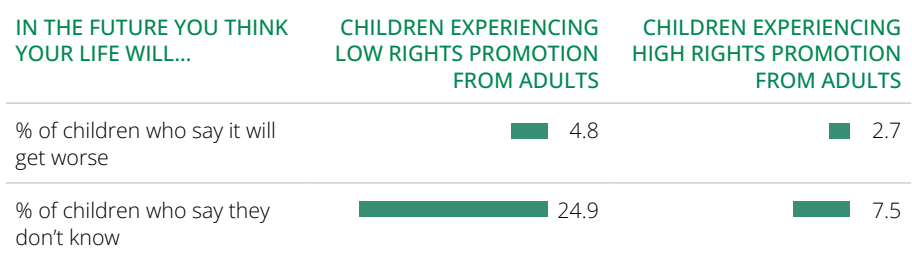
This underscores the critical importance of promoting strong awareness and understanding of children's rights. By fostering a culture where children are empowered with knowledge of their rights and supported in exercising them, we can enhance their resilience, optimism, and ability to envision a positive future despite challenges.

The same argument applies when examining children's responses about their vision of the future in relation to their perception of how their rights are promoted by adults (Figure 63). Once again, children who perceive low promotion of their rights by duty-

Figure 62
Differences in the vision of the future between children with weak and strong rights perception

IN THE FUTURE YOU THINK YOUR LIFE WILL…	CHILDREN WITH A WEAK RIGHTS PERCEPTION	CHILDREN WITH A STRONG RIGHT PERCEPTION
% of children who say it will get worse	5.5	2.8
% of children who say they don't know	18.6	12.4

Figure 63
Differences in the vision of the future between children experiencing high and low rights promotion from adults

IN THE FUTURE YOU THINK YOUR LIFE WILL…	CHILDREN EXPERIENCING LOW RIGHTS PROMOTION FROM ADULTS	CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HIGH RIGHTS PROMOTION FROM ADULTS
% of children who say it will get worse	4.8	2.7
% of children who say they don't know	24.9	7.5

bearing adults tend to express more uncertainty and pessimism about their future.

As duty bearers, adults play a crucial role in children's lives, not only by ensuring their rights are upheld but also by fostering their capacity to aspire. When adults actively promote and protect children's rights, they contribute significantly to enhancing children's confidence, resilience, and optimism about their future. This support is essential for nurturing a positive outlook and empowering children to envision and pursue their goals despite obstacles they may face.

There is a notable disparity in future outlook between children who currently feel happy and those who do not: optimistic responses are more prevalent among those who feel happy, whereas uncertainty and negativity are more common among children who do not

currently report themselves as happy. This underscores the crucial role of present emotional well-being in shaping children's ability to envision a brighter and more promising future. Emotional happiness plays a pivotal role in fostering resilience and optimism among children, influencing their outlook on life and their ability to navigate challenges with confidence.
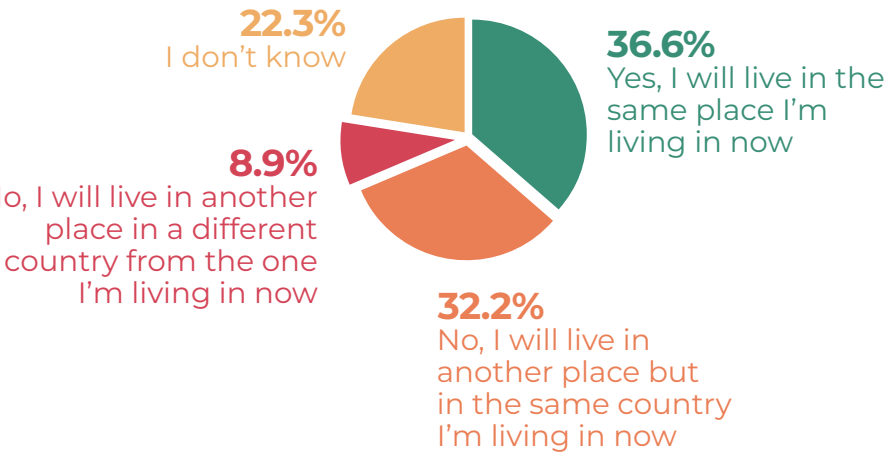
WHERE CHILDREN ENVISION THEIR FUTURE

We then asked the participants to imagine where they thought they would live in the future. A majority of children envision themselves living in the same place they currently reside, or at least in the same country. However, more than 1 in 5 children (22.3%) express uncertainty about their future living arrangements, while nearly 9% imagine living in another country (Figure 64).

Notably, among those who anticipate their lives worsening in the future, the idea of relocating to another country is more prevalent. This sentiment is particularly pronounced in Moldova, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Europe (Figure 65).

> " I don't see anything positive in my life. I wish to live somewhere else outside the town.
> *(Girl, 18, Lebanon)*

Figure 64
Where children imagine living in the future

- **22.3%** I don't know
- **8.9%** No, I will live in another place in a different country from the one I'm living in now
- **32.2%** No, I will live in another place but in the same country I'm living in now
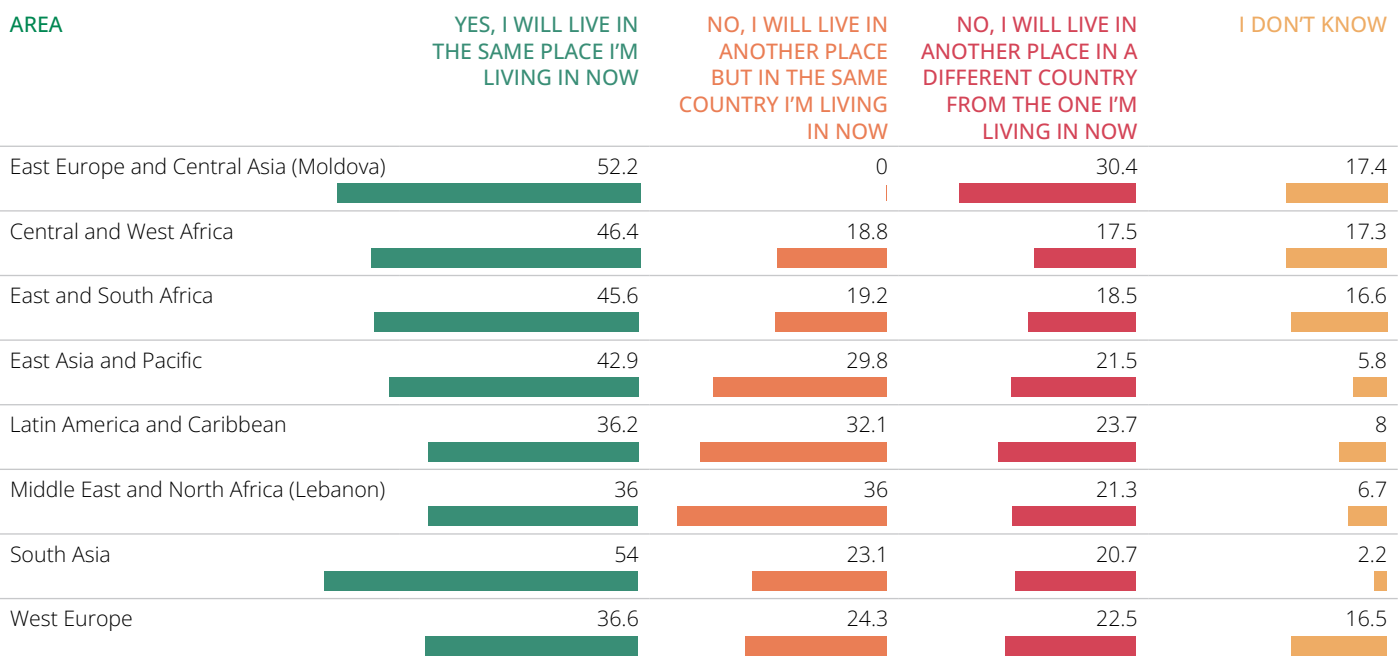- **36.6%** Yes, I will live in the same place I'm living in now

When examining different segments of the sample, a few notable differences emerge. For instance, **the proportion of children who anticipate living in another country is significantly higher among those with a migration background: 19.5% of them envision living abroad, compared to 8.3% of those without a migration background. This percentage jumps notably to 38.6% for children with a migrant** background in East and South Africa, and to 29.1% in West Europe.

Similarly, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds also show a tendency to imagine their future in another country, though the difference is less pronounced: 11.9% of them envision living abroad, compared to 7.6% among those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

Figure 65
Where children imagine living in the future: differences among the geographic areas

AREA	YES, I WILL LIVE IN THE SAME PLACE I'M LIVING IN NOW	NO, I WILL LIVE IN ANOTHER PLACE BUT IN THE SAME COUNTRY I'M LIVING IN NOW	NO, I WILL LIVE IN ANOTHER PLACE IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY FROM THE ONE I'M LIVING IN NOW	I DON'T KNOW
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	52.2	0	30.4	17.4
Central and West Africa	46.4	18.8	17.5	17.3
East and South Africa	45.6	19.2	18.5	16.6
East Asia and Pacific	42.9	29.8	21.5	5.8
Latin America and Caribbean	36.2	32.1	23.7	8
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	36	36	21.3	6.7
South Asia	54	23.1	20.7	2.2
West Europe	36.6	24.3	22.5	16.5

PROJECTING ONESELF INTO THE FUTURE: THE ISSUE OF INDIVIDUAL AGENCY

During this phase of the consultation, children were invited to envision their future capabilities by imagining certain actions they might undertake. **The objective was to gauge their belief in their ability to actualize a range of rights, thereby emphasizing the concept of capabilities.** This question focused on the respondent's confidence in their future agency and autonomy, specifically regarding personal autonomy and decision-making.

Among the responses, it was found that the actions children least imagined themselves capable of in the future include living independently and making decisions about their lives without needing anyone's permission, cited by more than 40% of children. This reluctance may stem from their age and current level of autonomy. Additionally, **more than 30% of children expressed doubt about their ability to freely decide on matters such as marriage and having children** (Figure 66).

Regarding these specific items, significant geographic differences are evident (Figure 67). South Asia stands out as the region with the lowest levels of agreement across all listed items. Children here appear to have lower expectations regarding their ability to realize these rights in the future.

Considering the differences within the sample segments, it is notable that adolescents report higher expectations regarding their ability to earn money and decide how to spend it compared to pre-adolescents. Specifically, 76% of adolescents believe they will succeed in this endeavor, whereas 71.6% of pre-adolescents share this belief.

Figure 66
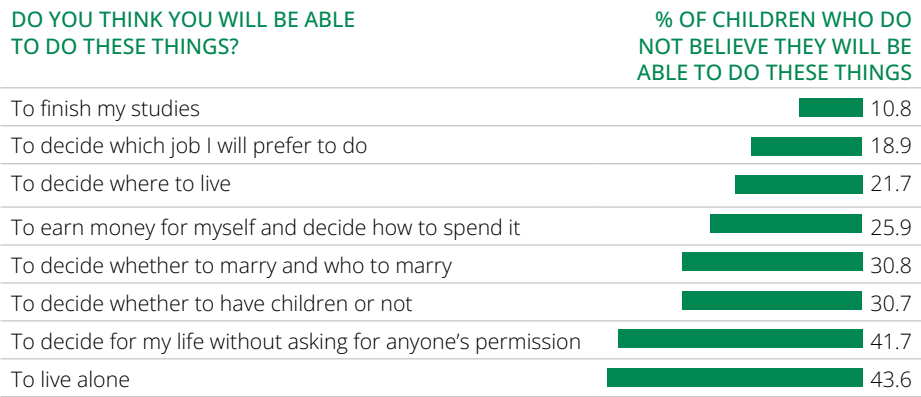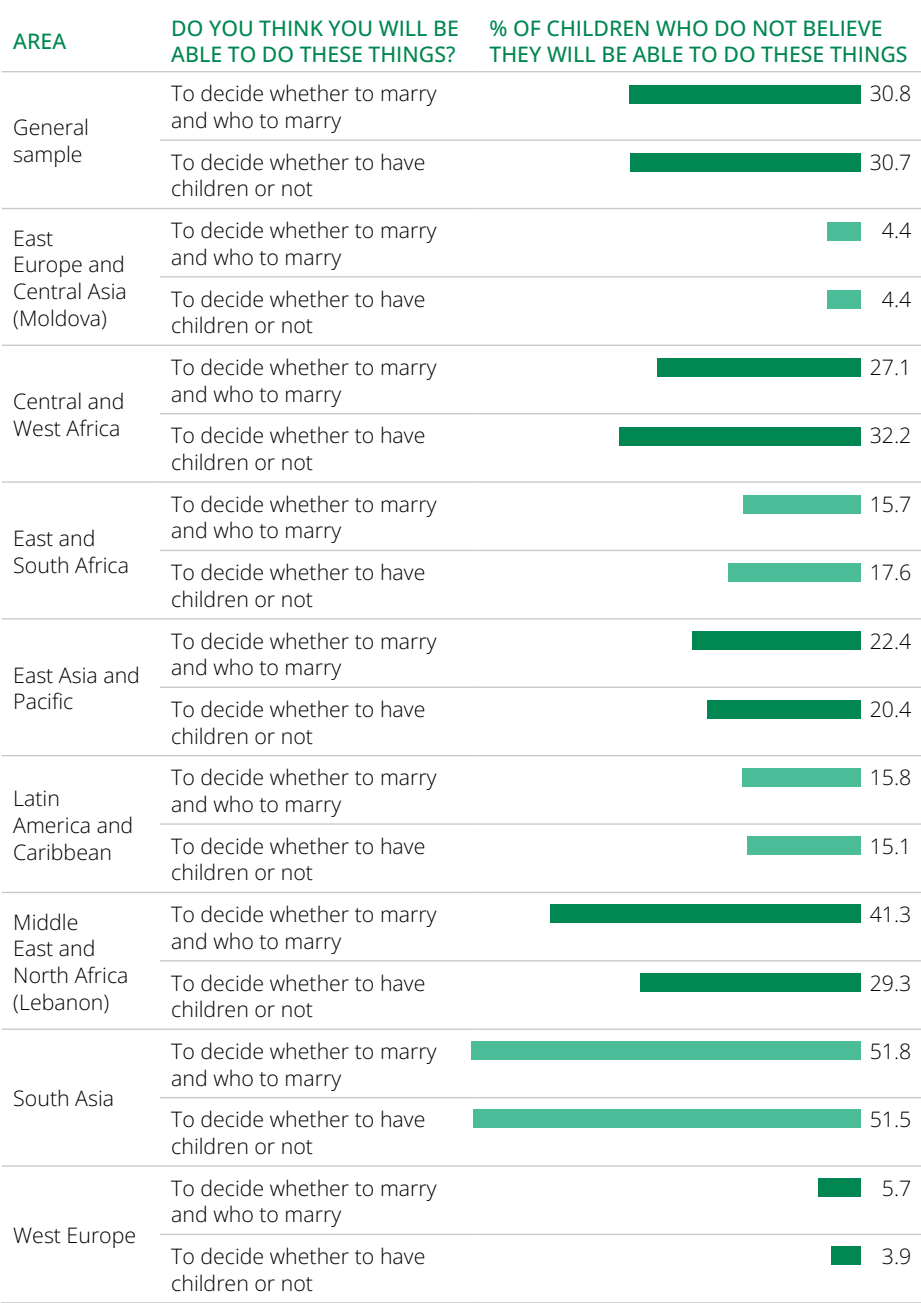**Things that children do not believe they will be able to do in the future**

DO YOU THINK YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO THESE THINGS?	% OF CHILDREN WHO DO NOT BELIEVE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO DO THESE THINGS
To finish my studies	10.8
To decide which job I will prefer to do	18.9
To decide where to live	21.7
To earn money for myself and decide how to spend it	25.9
To decide whether to marry and who to marry	30.8
To decide whether to have children or not	30.7
To decide for my life without asking for anyone's permission	41.7
To live alone	43.6

Figure 67
Children who do not believe that in the future they will be able to freely decide whether to marry or have children

AREA	DO YOU THINK YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO THESE THINGS?	% OF CHILDREN WHO DO NOT BELIEVE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO DO THESE THINGS
General sample	To decide whether to marry and who to marry	30.8
	To decide whether to have children or not	30.7
East Europe and Central Asia (Moldova)	To decide whether to marry and who to marry	4.4
	To decide whether to have children or not	4.4
Central and West Africa	To decide whether to marry and who to marry	27.1
	To decide whether to have children or not	32.2
East and South Africa	To decide whether to marry and who to marry	15.7
	To decide whether to have children or not	17.6
East Asia and Pacific	To decide whether to marry and who to marry	22.4
	To decide whether to have children or not	20.4
Latin America and Caribbean	To decide whether to marry and who to marry	15.8
	To decide whether to have children or not	15.1
Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon)	To decide whether to marry and who to marry	41.3
	To decide whether to have children or not	29.3
South Asia	To decide whether to marry and who to marry	51.8
	To decide whether to have children or not	51.5
West Europe	To decide whether to marry and who to marry	5.7
	To decide whether to have children or not	3.9

> *I should not get married right away even if it helps me get a good job after finishing college.*
> *(Girl, 17, India)*

> *What I ask for most in the future is to have a steady job where I earn well so I can give my mom what she never had.*
> *(Girl, 13, Paraguay)*

3 children in 10 believe that in their future **they will not be able to freely decide** whether to marry or have children

> *We don't have to marry someone we don't like.*
> *(Girl, 14, Niger)*

Girls express feeling less freedom in choosing whom to marry: 32.2% of them believe this compared to 29.5% of boys. Additionally, a slightly higher percentage of girls than boys fear they will not be able to complete their studies: 11.4% of girls compared to 10.2% of boys share this concern. However, a higher proportion of girls feel confident about earning money and managing it: 75% of girls agree they will achieve this, compared to 73% of boys. **This trend holds across both pre-adolescent and adolescent girls, suggesting that gender, rather than age, influences these perceptions. This inclination could be attributed to a stronger aspiration for independence and empowerment among girls.**

On the other hand, children who identify as having a disability have lower expectations regarding their educational and employment prospects. Specifically, 16.5% believe they will not finish school, compared to 10.4% of those without a disability. Similarly, 25.8% of children with disabilities think they will not secure a job, whereas only 18.5% of those without disabilities share this concern.

Children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds often face challenges in envisioning themselves capable of achieving various life goals listed. This includes critical decisions such as choosing a marital partner, deciding on parenthood, determining future residence, and overall life aspirations.

Similarly, children with low perceptions of their rights demonstrate diminished expectations across these same aspects. These crucial decisions may seem less achievable to them, reflecting doubts about their ability to exercise these rights effectively during their lifetime. Such perceptions suggest a lack of confidence in their capacity to shape their own futures autonomously and deliberately.

This principle also holds true in environments where children's rights are inadequately safeguarded by duty bearers. Generally, **when adults provide low or moderate levels of rights promotion, children's expectations across various life domains tend to diminish**. **These children may perceive their ability to shape their circumstances and pursue meaningful goals as limited due to insufficient support and acknowledgment of their rights from responsible adults and institutions.**

> *I want to tell you about the future I want. I want to complete my studies smoothly and become a successful psychologist. When I become a psychologist, I want to visit students at school to provide socialization or do checks related to mental health. Because maybe children are less open to new people so I want to be a person that children trust and not fear when they will tell their experiences or difficulties.*
> *(Girl, 14, Indonesia)*

Children Believe: Partnering with Young People for Change

Children Believe
Member of ChildFund Alliance

Everyday choices are stolen from children and youth due to multitudes of factors including child labour, hunger, conflicts, discriminatory cultural norms, natural disasters, climate change, gender inequality, child marriage, period poverty, or insecurity. These barriers rob children of their rights to fulfill their dreams and options for a better life, especially in some deprived communities where Children Believe works.

Children Believe supports children, families, and communities in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Nicaragua, and Paraguay to overcome these barriers, empowering them to live the lives they choose and become voices for change. They work to ensure every child receives quality education because education means choices.

Children Believe recognize that protecting and promoting the choices of children and youths involves engaging them in activities that improve their future. Partnering with young people for change means actively involving them in decisions affecting their lives, valuing their perspectives, and empowering them as change agents. Through their programs, they collaborate with local communities and young people in six countries of operation to tackle issues that affect their future, defend and promote the choices of children. They create opportunities and platforms for young people to share knowledge, engage in meaningful intercultural exchanges, and participate in life skills and vocational training.

Grounded in child rights approaches, Children Believe's programs have created platforms for young people to claim their rights and get empowered to lead social change and implement community-driven actions toward a more just world. They provide spaces for them to enhance their leadership, entrepreneurial, and critical thinking skills through initiatives like children's parliaments, youth clubs focused on issues like climate change and violence prevention, and school/community groups that amplify their voices on local, provisional, and national platforms.

In India, Children Believe work with marginalized and tribal communities, to increase access to early learning centers designed to address the needs of children from these communities. Their Creative Learning Centres have bridged the educational gap for communities that historically did not have access to schools. These initiatives, coupled with providing infrastructures like solar lighting have enhanced girls' safety, and reduced the gender gap in higher education, with a remarkable 78 percent increase in enrollment among all children. **Children Believe also collaborate with schools, governments, and community partners to implement progressive laws and policies that protect and promote children's choices and address unemployment.** In Nicaragua, through their youth employability project (EMPUJE), they partnered with government technical departments to improve vocational skills development opportunities, create more access for young people; especially young women, and enhance their economic opportunities and prospects for employment for a better future.

Children Believe remains committed to fostering a future of hope and resilience by partnering with children and communities, equipping them with the skills and resources needed to break cycles of poverty and injustice, and ensuring they reach their full potential. They won't stop until every child lives the life that they choose.

PROJECTING ONESELF INTO THE FUTURE: THE ISSUE OF SOCIETAL CIRCUMSTANCES

After reflecting on their personal aspirations, children were asked to shift their attention to their expectations for the future. This question aimed to understand their anticipated life experiences and societal conditions, focusing not on their personal aspirations but on what they foresee happening within their communities and societies as they grow up.

The responses unveiled several key expectations: maintaining good health and receiving proper care, securing fulfilling employment, completing their education, and the potential for returning to their home community (Figure 68). These expectations provide insight into the hopes and concerns children have regarding their future well-being and opportunities.

Remarkably, **8 out of 10 children expect that adults will ask their opinions in the future and listen to what they have to say. This belief may stem from their approaching adulthood, where they envision being regarded as individuals with valuable insights. It might signify a desire to be acknowledged as active contributors to decisions that impact their lives, reflecting an evolving awareness of their role in shaping both personal and societal futures.**

Across different geographical regions, a few significant differences in expectations were observed, except for specific items of note. In Central and West Africa, the proportion of children expecting to complete their studies drops to 74% (compared to 82.4 % in the overall sample). This decline may reflect educational challenges and socio-economic hardships prevalent in these regions, where access to

education is often impeded by conflict, poverty, and inadequate infrastructure. Conversely, in Latin America, there is a notable increase in the percentage of children expecting to live in a world with fewer environmental disasters, reaching 86% (compared to 76% in the general sample). This shift could signify heightened awareness and mobilization around environmental issues in the region. Similarly, there is an uptick in the percentage of children expecting to reside in places with reduced crime and violence, reported by 86.6% in Latin America (compared to 80.3% overall). This trend likely reflects a strong aspiration for greater security and social stability in their communities. In South Asia, there are

notably lower expectations regarding the ability to make free decisions about one's life, with the percentage dropping to 67.1% (compared to 75.2% in the general sample). This difference may be influenced by rigid social and cultural norms prevalent in the region, which often restrict self-determination, particularly among women and minorities.

Figure 68
Children's expectations for their future

HOW MUCH DO YOU EXPECT TO EXPERIENCE THESE THINGS IN YOUR FUTURE?*	% OF CHILDREN WHO REPLIED 4 OR 5
To be able to finish school or continue study as much as possible	82.4
To live in a place where there is no war or crime	80.3
Not to be treated differently because of my gender, origin, religion, ethnicity, disability, etc.	77.8
To possess all the things that I need to feel well	82.2
To be able to return to my home/community of origin	82.4
Not to have people around me doing or saying things that hurt me	75.0
To feel safe when I use the Internet	75.5
Not to feel alone	76.6
To have adults around me asking for my opinion and that my opinion is heard	80.0
To live in a world in which environmental disasters (floods, hurricanes, droughts, etc.) happen less frequently	76.0
To find a job I like	84.0
To live in good health and be cared for when I am sick	86.8
To be able to freely decide about my life without asking anyone's permission	75.2

* Children could assign a score to these items on a scale from 1 (the least expected) to 5 (the most expected).

> Adults should teach us about and how to get there, to the future.
> *(Girl, 15, Ghana)*

> I envision a future without crime, with more job opportunities.
> *(Boy, 17, Honduras)*

Figure 69

Expectations that children with disabilities have for their future

HOW MUCH DO YOU EXPECT TO EXPERIENCE THESE THINGS IN YOUR FUTURE?*	% OF CHILDREN WHO IDENTIFY AS A PERSON WITH DISABILITIES REPLIED 4 OR 5	% OF CHILDREN WHO DO NOT IDENTIFY AS A PERSON WITH DISABILITYIES REPLIED 4 OR 5
To be able to finish school or continue study as much as possible	71.0	83.1
To live in a place where there is no war or crime	74.7	80.7
Not to be treated differently because of my gender, origin, religion, ethnicity, disability, etc.	73.1	78.0
To possess all the things that I need to feel well	70.3	83.6
To be able to return to my home/community of origin	69.5	79.0
Not to have people around me doing or saying things that hurt me	74.9	75.4
To feel safe when I use the Internet	65.0	76.2
Not to feel alone	70.6	77.0
To have adults around me asking for my opinion and that my opinion is heard	74.1	80.5
To live in a world in which environmental disasters (floods, hurricanes, droughts, etc.) happen less frequently	72.1	77.0
To find a job I like	72.7	84.8
To live in good health and be cared for when I am sick	79.0	87.3
To be able to freely decide about my life without asking anyone's permission	70.6	75.5

* Children could assign a score to these items on a scale from 1 (the least expected) to 5 (the most expected).

When examining the variations among different segments of the sample, no significant differences appear concerning age or gender. However, **children who identify as having disabilities show markedly lower expectations regarding their future across nearly all surveyed items** (Figure 69). This disparity may stem from the physical, social, and cultural barriers they encounter regularly, as well as from a perceived lack of societal support and accommodation for their specific needs, contributing to their skepticism about improving their circumstances.

Comparing the ChildFund Alliance Global Consultation with the World Index

The Women's Sub-Index, one of the three components of the World Index, evaluates women's human rights implementation across 10 indicators in 5 dimensions — health, education, economic opportunities, decision-making participation and violence against women—resulting in a global country ranking.

As explored in Chapter 2, the Women's Sub-Index consistently scores the lowest among the three sub-indexes, positioning women as the most vulnerable and marginalized group. This led us to investigate whether today's girls—the women of tomorrow—perceive this systematic disadvantage and discrimination, and how it might impact their ability to envision their future. We correlated the geographical areas' scores in the Women's Sub-Index with the expectations girls have about their future.

Specifically, we associated the dimensions of the Women's Sub-Index with responses to a series of questions:
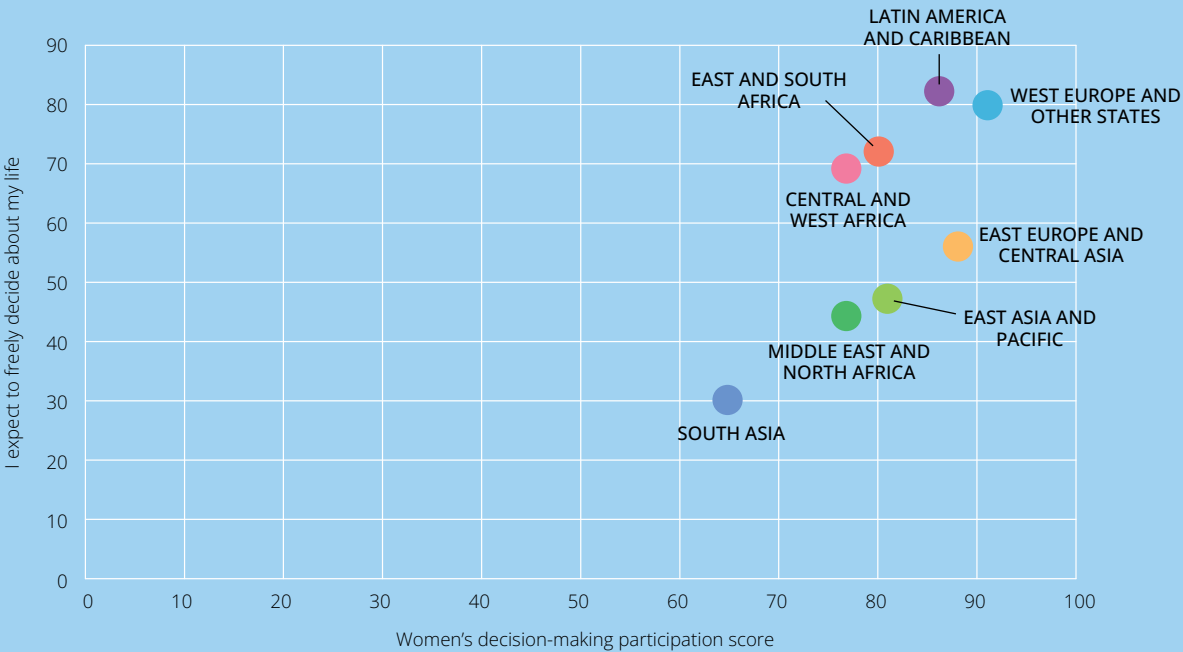▸ **Women's Health**: "I expect to live in good health and be cared for when I am sick."
▸ **Women's Education**: "I expect to be able to finish school or continue studying as much as possible."
▸ **Women's Economic Opportunities**: "I expect to find a job I like."
▸ **Women's Decision-Making Participation**: "I expect to be able to freely decide about my life without asking anyone's permission."
▸ **Violence against Women**: "I expect not to have people around me doing or saying things that hurt me."

In general, a positive correlation emerged for all dimensions. **Countries that score higher on these dimensions, indicating higher levels of implementation of women's human rights, are also those where girls have higher expectations about their future**. The correlation is particularly significant for the dimensions of "Economic Opportunities" and "Decision-Making Participation."

This might suggest the importance of role modeling: women's agency has a positive effect on girls' ability to dream big. When women in a society have access to economic opportunities and the ability to make decisions about their lives, it inspires girls to envision similar possibilities for their own futures.

The figure below illustrates this significant correlation.

Children with migrant backgrounds show notable differences in their expectations compared to those without such backgrounds. Specifically, these children express less confidence in their ability to live in good health and receive proper care when sick, with only 82.3% sharing this expectation compared to 87.1% of their peers without a migrant background. This disparity reflects the challenges and barriers migrant children often encounter within healthcare systems, including limited access to services, language and cultural differences, and poor living conditions that can adversely impact their health. Furthermore, **children with a migrant background are less optimistic about returning to their community or country of origin, with only 70.7% expecting to do so compared to 78.8% among children without a migrant background.** This difference may stem from various factors, including uncertainties related to their families' migration status, economic and logistical challenges associated with returning, and potentially traumatic experiences in their country of origin that diminish their desire and feasibility of returning.

Children belonging to minorities hold less optimistic expectations regarding non-discrimination, with only 67.3% expecting not to be treated differently in the future, compared to 80.4% of non-minority children. This stark contrast might underscore a sense of mistrust and apprehension about fair treatment and social inclusion. These children anticipate that current barriers and prejudices will persist, continuing to impact their lives negatively in the future. Their perception of a society that may not fully embrace them likely

could reflect personal experiences of exclusion and discrimination, emphasizing the critical need for targeted interventions to advance equality and foster inclusivity.

Similarly, children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds generally have diminished expectations across all listed items. This trend is also evident among children with weak perceptions of their rights and those who perceive low levels of adult promotion of their rights. Once again, **these findings highlight how socioeconomic circumstances and awareness of one's rights significantly shape children's outlooks for the future.**

3.2.4
Shaping the Future

In the final stage of the consultation, children were asked to identify priorities for intervention and actions adults should take to ensure a better future for them. This phase concluded by directly giving voice to the children, allowing them to share their testimonies, propose solutions, and express their dreams, fears, and expectations for the future.

CHILDREN'S PRIORITIES

After questioning children about their individual agency and the expectations they have for their future and that of their society, we asked them what priority areas adults should intervene in their lives to ensure them a brighter and more inclusive future.

At a general level, the highest priority issues adults should intervene on include education, health and access to care, meeting basic needs, combating all forms of violence and the climate crisis (Figure 70).

Regarding geographic areas, children from different regions identified distinct priority issues for adult intervention.

In Central and West Africa, more children perceive it as a priority that no child is forced to abandon their home or community. This concern is shared by 86.7% of children in this region, compared to 83.3% of the general sample. Additionally, 89.3% of children **in Central and West Africa report that it is a priority to ensure no child is forced to fight in a conflict**, which is higher than the 84.5% of the general sample who feel the same. **In East and South Africa, a higher percentage of children identify not having to live in war or conflict as a priority.** Specifically, 87% of children in this region say this, compared to 85.3% of the general sample. **In East Asia and the Pacific, there is a significant increase in the priority placed on children being able to surf the Internet safely.** This priority is emphasized by 85.2% of children in East Asia and the Pacific, compared to 75.4% of the general sample. **Children also report higher agreement in this region on the importance of safeguarding the environmen**t, with 89.6% highlighting this compared to 85.7% of the general sample. In Latin America, there is an overall increase in the percentage of

children identifying almost all listed interventions as priorities. Notably, 92.2% of children **in Latin America identify that preventing violence or maltreatment of children is a priority**, compared to 86.7% in the general sample. In contrast to other regions, children in South Asia report lower percentages of identifying the listed interventions as priorities for almost all proposed items. This suggests that **children in South Asia may**

have different immediate concerns or may perceive the feasibility of certain interventions differently compared to their peers in other regions. Additionally, in areas where Internet access is not widely guaranteed, such as parts of Africa and South Asia, ensuring Internet access and safe surfing for children does not appear to be a priority intervention. This lack of emphasis likely reflects the current limited access to digital infrastructure and possibly a focus on more immediate, fundamental needs. **Such differences in identifying priorities underscore the importance of recognizing and addressing the unique context and needs of children in different regions.** Tailoring interventions to fit these regional priorities is crucial for effectively improving the well-being and future prospects of children globally.

Figure 70
Children's expectation for their future

THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE LIVES AND FUTURE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE WORLD	% OF CHILDREN WHO REPLIED 4 OR 5*
Listening to children and ask their opinion	84.0
Ensuring that all children have access to food, water and what they need to feel well	89.3
Ensuring that all children can always go to school and receive an education	89.4
Ensuring that all children can live in good health and be cared for when they are ill	89.4
Ensuring that no child suffers violence or mistreatment	86.7
Ensuring that no child is forced to fight in a conflict	84.5
Ensuring that no child has to live in situations of war or crime	85.3
Ensuring that no child is forced to abandon their home or community	83.3
Ensuring that all children have access to the Internet	66.3
Ensuring that all children can browse the Internet safely	75.4
Ensuring that all children can live in a clean, healthy and safe natural environment, without having to worry about environmental disasters	85.7
Ensuring that no child is forced to work	83.2
Ensuring that no child is forced to marry	84.1
Ensuring that no girl child is forced to get pregnant	85.1

* Children could assign a score to these items on a scale from 1 (the least important) to 5 (the most important).

ChildFund International: Children and Youth Leading the Way on Climate Action

ChildFund International (CFI) works through local partners in Asia, Africa and the Americas to connect children and youth with the people, resources and institutions they need to grow up healthy, educated, skilled and safe and to address the underlying conditions that prevent them from achieving their full potential. CFI recognizes the importance of meaningful child and youth participation in decision-making at individual, community and national levels, and to inform its own efforts.

Despite global progress, children and youth continue to face significant challenges that threaten their future wellbeing, including ongoing conflict, humanitarian crises, and evolving online harm. According to youth, chief amongst these threats are climate-related disasters and the day-to-day negative impacts of climate change. In response, CFI actively uplifts children's and youth's ideas, concerns and solutions on climate action internally and with external stakeholders.

From February to March 2024, CFI invited young climate advocates to share their ideas on climate action leading up to UNICEF's NGO consultation, "Partnering for children in the climate crisis". Over 400 youth from seven countries (the Philippines, The Gambia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Bolivia, Mexico, Brazil) responded.

Respondents called for **accessible, holistic and practical environmental education** and business and financial skill building to support solution development. Youth want spaces to collaborate on climate issues together and build problem-solving, advocacy and communication skills.

"Preparing students for climate challenges is crucial. ...understanding climate science can empower individuals to address and adapt to climate change effectively." – Youth, the Philippines

Respondents shared the importance of **youth-led initiatives**, uplifting their social media use to galvanize peers and communities, disseminate information and inspire collective action. However, greater digital access and literacy is needed to maximize this potential. Adults should support by providing funding, mentorship and technology access and push for strong environmental policies.

Youth emphasized the importance of **communities, governments and NGOs giving space for them to meaningfully participate in decision-making**, project design and implementation of climate initiatives.

"What works is when communities provide meaningful opportunities for young people...what doesn't work is when young people['s] ...voices are not heard." – Youth, Sierra Leone

To uphold child protection and build climate resilience, youth identified the need for emergency preparedness plans, community sensitization and safe places during emergencies. Youth should support response efforts and feed into emergency plans.

Overall, they recommended that NGOs, communities and governments:

▸ Meaningfully include youth in decision-making on climate action initiatives
▸ Provide learning opportunities to build climate knowledge and resources to develop solutions
▸ Increase awareness to address complex social-development challenges associated with climate change
▸ Equip youth with skills and tools to ensure their safety and protection in diverse spaces

CFI shared these recommendations with UNFCCC to inform its children and climate change workshop and will use them to inform its own efforts going forward. Young people have big ideas and understand that the status quo is not enough to address the climate crisis. By harnessing their energy and creativity and leveraging technology, we can support them to build a more sustainable future for all.

ChildFund Australia and the Swipe Safe Online Safety Project

In a world increasingly reliant on technology, children and young people face a multitude of new challenges and risks when it comes to staying safe online. As technology rapidly evolves and becomes a central feature of social interactions, education, work and play, the importance of online safety education for children is undeniable.

Children's experiences of online safety are profoundly influenced by the social, cultural, political, economic and material conditions that underpin the diverse contexts in which they live and grow. These factors affect their access to digital infrastructure, devices, digital literacy education, support services, and mechanisms of redress. In the Pacific, cable internet systems have rapidly increased the potential for children in the region to benefit from digital connectivity. However, in places like the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Papua New Guinea, children's online engagement is not always adequately supported by accessible and culturally appropriate online safety education.

Moreover, trusted adults are not always equipped to guide children as they navigate the digital environment. In the context of international concerns about the potential for digital technology to expose children to harm, it is critical that children's needs, aspirations and rights are prioritised amidst the rapid upscaling of technological infrastructure and the provision of connectivity.

Recognising the need to strengthen children's and young people's online safety skills, ChildFund Australia developed the Swipe Safe online safety project in Vietnam in 2017, eventually extending its benefits to more children in Cambodia, Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands. Building on this work and through a qualitative, participatory research, ChildFund Australia worked closely with young people and their families in the Pacific to generate rich insights about how they conceptualise and respond to online safety challenges, which was then used to develop the Swipe Safe app to reach even more children across the region.

The Swipe Safe app is a youth-centred, interactive and educational app that is designed to teach young people to identify risks of harm online and to adopt protective behaviours. By providing relatable examples and scenarios, Swipe Safe helps children and young people to learn about online safety by exploring different safety issues, diverse decision pathways and their consequences.

Participants in Solomon Islands reported that the use of real-world scenarios and strategies provided learning and ideas which they had not encountered before:

"I like the modules because it helps me to not get into trouble when surfing online; this module helps me to think before posting online; give me knowledge that everything I post is permanent and public." (Boy, 16, Solomon Islands)

"Some stories insides are interesting, fun and also tricky. I like it because it gives me more ideas on how to be more responsible." (Girl, 16, Solomon Islands)

In addition to the real-world scenarios and strategies, participants appreciated that the app featured the consequences of different modes of decision making, helping them understand why it is important to learn about how to manage different online safety scenarios. These skills will help prepare children to deal with a range of online safety risks and supports young people to identify and know how to respond in similar off-line situations.

Jake Lyell Photography

Finally, looking at the different segments of the sample, no significant differences related to the age of the respondents emerge.

In general, the level of agreement on the priority of these interventions is higher for girls across all listed items. Their top priorities are the right to health, education and meeting basic needs, and combating all forms of violence and maltreatment. Boys' priorities cover the same areas but in a different order: education, right to health, satisfaction of basic needs, and countering all forms of violence and maltreatment. **For girls, the right to health appears to be a higher priority than even education.**

Children with disabilities, on the other hand, report significantly lower levels of agreement on all of these interventions, likely reflecting the unique challenges they face. The lack of access to adequate resources and perceptions of exclusion can undermine their confidence in existing systems and reduce enthusiasm for recognizing these areas as priorities. **Addressing these challenges**

requires inclusive approaches, direct consultations with children with disabilities, and a commitment to overcoming barriers that limit their full development and well-being.

The same situation is observed for children from migrant backgrounds, those belonging to a linguistic or religious minority, and those from native, indigenous, or aboriginal communities. These groups face similar challenges related to access to culturally appropriate and inclusive services, including health and educational services. Discrimination, language and cultural barriers, along with marginalizing policies, may reduce their agreement on priorities for intervention. Experiences of exclusion and lack of representation could, in addition, undermine trust in existing systems, affecting the identification of priorities.

> *I want to be able to speak my language again, I forgot it a little. We use Spanish now. My grandma knows how to speak our language, but I don't remember it well. I'd like to teach someone else so we can all talk in it again.*
> *(non-binary, 16, El Salvador)*

> *We, the girls of the indigenous communities, find it difficult to give our opinion on the issue of some uses and customs that do not benefit us.*
> *(Girl, 14, Mexico)*

CHILDREN'S VOICES: CLAIMING OUR RIGHTS TO THE FUTURE

In conclusion, the sample was asked two open-ended questions, one of which was optional, to indicate what solutions adults should implement to ensure a better future for them.

The entire sample of 11,014 boys and girls was considered in the analysis of this qualitative data. **The responses were first collected in 27 different languages and then translated into English to facilitate the analysis**. Once translated, a cleaning of the responses was performed to remove inconsistent or irrelevant data, such as duplicate or out-of-context details (see the methodological note in the Appendix). After this process, **8,723** responses were usable, which were analyzed to identify children's feelings, recurring themes, and areas of greatest concern and hope.

In general, **the feelings expressed by the children in their responses were positive in 90% of the cases**. Among the positive feelings, the one most cited is **trust,** reflecting widespread optimism and hope for the future. However, among the negative feelings, the most cited is **fear**, highlighting the worries and uncertainties that some children feel about their future. **This duality of feelings shows a complex but predominantly optimistic landscape, where hope outweighs worry, but the latter still remains present and significant.**

From the analysis of the responses, the words most frequently used by boys and girls in expressing requests and advice made it possible to identify some macro-areas of priority action that are crucial for their future:

LET US STUDY TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS: Words such as "school," "education," and "studies" emerged frequently, indicating a strong desire to improve access to and quality of education. Many children see education as the key to a better future and demand better schools and expanded learning opportunities. This emphasis on education highlights their belief in its power to open doors to better opportunities and improve their overall quality of life.

PROTECT US FROM VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION: Expressions such as "prevent child abuse," "safe place," and "no violence" show how children need concrete measures to be protected from harm, violence, abuse, and all forms of discrimination. They seek assurances that they can develop to their full potential in a climate of respect, justice, and safety. The frequent mention of these terms underscores their urgency for a safer, more just environment where their rights are protected.

ASK AND LISTEN TO OUR OPINIONS: Words like "listen," "opinions," and "decisions" highlight the need to be heard and involved in decision-making processes that affect them. Children want their opinions to be considered and respected, and they look to adults as interlocutors who can help them express their ideas and aspirations. This demand for a participatory role in decisions reflects their growing awareness of their rights and their desire to be active contributors to their communities and futures.

UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT US: Terms such as "understanding" and "respect" emphasize the importance of receiving support and respect from adults, showing genuine interest in children's well-being. Children express the need to be understood in their uniqueness and personality: feeling understood and appreciated enables them to develop a positive view of themselves, promoting their psychological and emotional well-being and encouraging their capacity to aspire.

ENCOURAGE, GUIDE AND SUPPORT US: Terms such as "help," "provide," "advice," and "guidance" show that children want adults to pay attention to their concerns and provide helpful advice, supporting them in their growth journey, both emotionally and materially. Adults, in fact, can be role models for them, figures from whom they can take example and inspiration for the future.

Reported in the next pages are some sample testimonies for each of the macro-areas identified.

IMPROVE ACCESS AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS

"For me adults can significantly help young people build their future by providing quality education, mentorship, support, setting good examples, creating opportunities, and listening. Education should include critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Mentorship can help young people avoid common pitfalls and make informed decisions. Support should encourage unconventional passions and dreams, while role models can demonstrate values like honesty, hard work, empathy, and respect. Opportunities can be created through internships, volunteer work, or part-time jobs. Open conversations about aspirations are crucial for effective support."
(Girl, 14, Philippines)

"To have a paved road and a school that reaches the final class so that the children of my area do not abandon it at the age of 12."
(Boy, 17, Haiti)

"Children should be given an opportunity to bring out their talents. The desires of adults should not be imposed on children. The safety of children must be ensured."
(Boy, 18, Sri Lanka)

"Adults need to develop a community for children to go to school so that they do not have to drop out of school and listen to their views, creating conditions for poor children to go to school like other children."
(Boy, 14, Vietnam)

"Let's take girls' education as a priority in our community."
(Boy, 18, Uganda)

"I would like to say that I would love to see more frequent and better-quality education on sexuality and sexual rights."
(Boy, 17, Mexico)

PROTECT US FROM VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

"I want a beautiful world from adults, where there is no violence."
(Girl, 13, Bangladesh)

"Adults should help children to live in a safe place, far from conflict areas."
(Boy, 18, Ethiopia)

"We girls should also be given equal opportunities for education like boys. As if we too should be sent to study outside the cities."
(Girl, 12, India)

"All children should have a safe and fear-free environment."
(Girl, 18, India)

"They should protect children from violence, ask them their opinion and treat both male and female the same."
(Boy, 16, Kenya)

"Adults should save me from the threats and dangers of gangs."
(Boy, 14, Haiti)

"Adults should stop saying things to me that hurt me. Instead, they have to support me so that I can succeed in life."
(Girl, 16, Madagascar)

"Respect our rights and end the war so that we can return home and have a better life than what we are currently experiencing."
*(Boy, 11, Mali)*

"Many children, especially young girls, leave school because of a lack of follow-up or because they are married, so we need to make our parents very aware of child marriage."
(Girl, 12, Niger)

"Adults should allow women and girls to support and join the community."
(Girl, 15, Sri Lanka)

"Prevent child abuse, love children more, keep your heart for children, and give children a pat on the back."
(Boy, 11, South Korea)

"I feel like parents should prepare us for the future by teaching us the best morals that can enable us not to end up as criminals and they must get rich themselves so that we can be proud of them some of these poor parents force their children into early marriage."
(Girl, 10, Uganda)

"I would really like a world where I don't feel afraid to go out alone"
(Girl, 16, Ecuador)
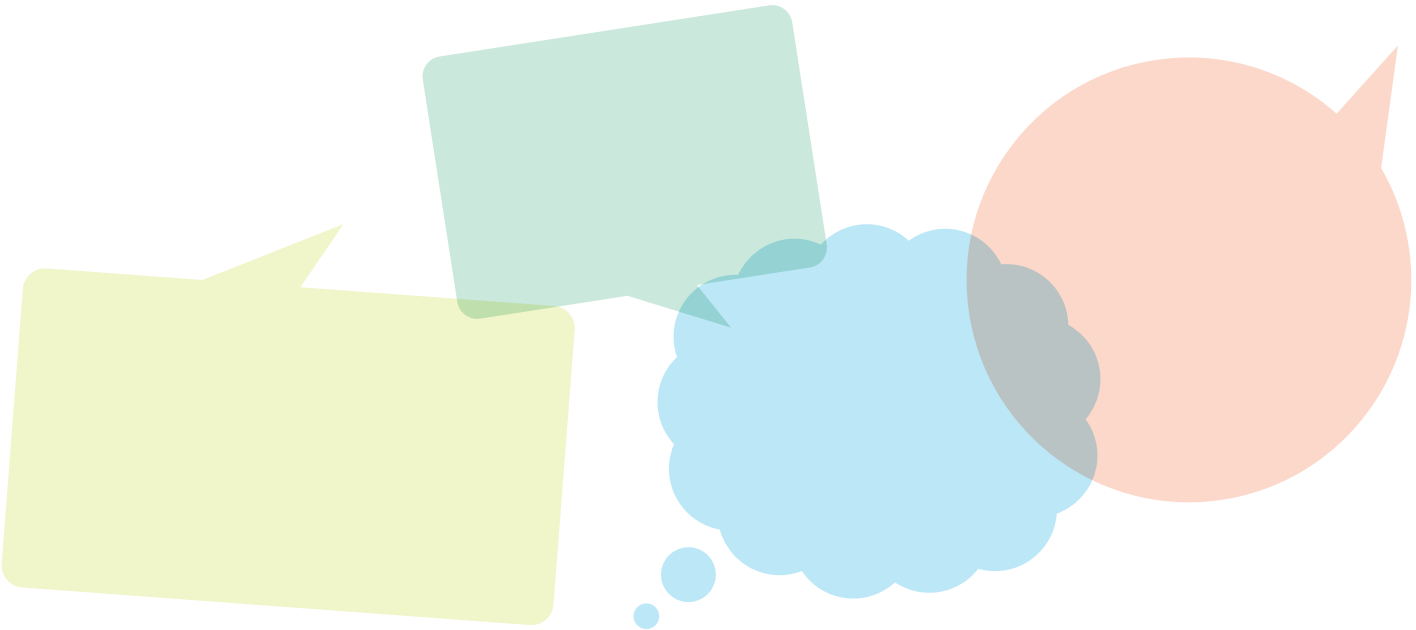
ASK AND LISTEN TO OUR OPINIONS

"They must be better at listening to children."
(Boy, 10, Benin)

"Being children and adolescents, each one of us needs the attention of adults, as well as their approval, in that case, adults must take us into account knowing that we are not only their children, grandchildren, siblings, etc... They must listen to our opinions for the simple fact that our future is part of it, and knowing that they want the best for us, each of them must take us more into account."
(Girl, 16, Bolivia)

"I think that adults should not forget their youthful thinking. It is important that they listen to us because we are also capable of having an opinion in front of the world and our thoughts are just as important for the development of today's society."
(Girl, 17, Ecuador)

"Children should have all rights. Children's opinions should be heard."
(Girl, 13, India)

"In my opinion, adults must let children express their opinion so that they can feel good and loved because a child needs attention and support."
(Girl, 18, Senegal)

"Listening to children's opinions and guiding them if they are right, explaining to them properly if they are wrong."
(Girl, 18, Sri Lanka)

"Adults around me should consult me and put into use my contribution."
(Girl, 13, Uganda)

UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT US

"Respect the opinion of young people and listen to them without making fun, mocking, cursing and fighting. Always try to understand and validate our feelings, as silly as some things we go through can be, not being respected hurts. We're figuring out life still. I think understanding and respecting above all who the teenager is, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion etc. I know how difficult it can be for parents or guardians to deal with teenagers... But understand that it is very difficult for us too! Especially when you don't have the support of those in charge... It can trigger so many problems."
(Girl, 15, Brazil)

"Let us be what we want to be."
(Girl, 10, Argentina)

"For me, adults should be more understanding and not be judgmental. Respect our choices despite everything. And not try to live our life, let us make our choices."
(Girl, 16, France)

"Understand that today's world is different from the world they lived in when they were 17 years old."
(Girl, 16, Mexico)

"Adults should know that we are flowers that do not wither."
(Girl, 12, Mozambique)

"Communication on both sides is crucial. Defending the rights of students and children should be a priority if as a country we are aiming for a more prosperous future in all areas."
(Boy, 17, Spain)

"Adults are supposed to help you believe in your dreams and even if sometimes you can't achieve them, they can give you a helping hand."
(Boy, 12, Italy)

"To help me build the future I want, adults can provide support, guidance, and resources tailored to my interests and goals. They can encourage me to explore diverse opportunities, whether through education, mentorship, or practical experience. Listening to my aspirations and offering constructive feedback fosters confidence and clarity in my path forward. Adults can also serve as role models by demonstrating resilience, adaptability, and a growth mindset, inspiring me to tackle challenges and pursue my dreams with determination. Furthermore, fostering a nurturing environment where I feel valued and empowered to express myself cultivates creativity and innovation. Encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving skills equips me to navigate an ever-evolving world. Additionally, promoting inclusivity and diversity fosters empathy and understanding, enabling me to collaborate effectively in diverse settings. Ultimately, adults can best support my future by nurturing my passions, providing opportunities for growth, and instilling values of integrity, empathy, and perseverance. By investing in my development holistically, they empower me to shape a future that aligns with my aspirations and contributes positively to society."
(Girl, 15, Philippines)

"Adults should tell me how good life is and how to behave in life since they have life experiences."
(Boy, 15, Zambia)

"Give me complete trust and time to be able to decide what is good for me, but in between that I also need guidance, motivation, encouragement and prayer in carving out the future."
(Girl, 18, Indonesia)

"Change their behaviors so that they realize that they repeat erroneous parenting patterns and that they unconsciously transmit it to us and that it is important to change to have a better future."
(Girl, 16, Mexico)

"Well, cheer me up by telling me that I will be able to achieve my goals."
(Girl, 15, Guatemala)

"I think adults should support their child in the way he or she chooses, giving advice and occasionally admonition, instead of insults or aggravation."
(Girl, 16, Thailand)

Jake Lyell Photography

WeWorld in Tanzania: Promoting Children's Right to Express Themselves

ChildFund Alliance member WeWorld is an independent Italian organization with a 50-year track record of advocating for the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups, especially children and adolescents, across more than 25 countries. The organization is deeply committed to researching and analyzing children's rights, needs and aspirations, particularly in the face of emerging global challenges.

Since 2010, WeWorld has been active in Tanzania, working in diverse sectors such as climate change, education, child protection, human rights, water and sanitation (WASH), and urban regeneration. Tanzania's rapidly growing population faces significant challenges. Larger households often struggle with accessing essential services, leading to higher poverty rates, increased dependency ratios, and reduced investments in the development of children and young adults. These challenges create numerous obstacles for children, including barriers to their participation. Many children are not accustomed to expressing their opinions and often feel that their views are dismissed by adults due to their age.

To address these issues, WeWorld developed a comprehensive toolkit with input from experts in education, child protection, and research. The toolkit aims to foster child participation and includes tips for school personnel, materials needed for implementation, detailed descriptions of activities, a play-based methodology, and notes for facilitators. These activities are designed to help children express their views on complex issues in a safe, child-friendly environment. They also support the development of life skills such as self-awareness and critical thinking, empowering children to understand their rights and realize the value of their opinions within their community.

The toolkit was initially tested with 31 children, aged 9 to 13, from three schools in Ndjombe, Pemba, and Dar es Salaam, including some with physical disabilities. The sessions used a play-based activity called "dream fruits," followed by peer-to-peer discussions aimed at identifying children's priorities, needs, and aspirations. Each child received 10 fruit cards, each representing a need (e.g., having their opinion heard, continuing their education, equality, etc.). They placed their most important needs and wishes closer to the trunk of a drawn tree, while less important ones were placed on the outer branches. The children then discussed their reflections with their peers and explored who or what might support them in achieving their aspirations for a better future. Many children felt that their parents or caregivers could help them achieve their dreams.

Children have expressed a strong desire to have their opinions heard at the family, school, and community levels.

One child in Pemba remarked, **"I need to have the chance to provide recommendations at school or family level."**

Another child in Pemba said, **"People must listen to and respect our voices; our ideas and views must be respected."**

The feedback from the three schools was very positive. Teachers in Ndjombe suggested that the toolkit be used regularly, as they believe it helps students better identify their dreams and aspirations to continue studying. WeWorld plans to continue using the toolkit not only in Tanzania but also in other contexts and is committed to translating these voices into meaningful action and supporting children's participation and empowerment.

we World
Member of ChildFund Alliance

3.3 Recommendations

Child participation is a fundamental principle within the framework of children's human rights and a cornerstone of their entitlement to have their rights met in the future. This principle underscores the importance of children's active involvement in decisions that directly impact their lives. **It is not only a right enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) but also a practical means of ensuring that their voices are heard and respected in all contexts, from local to global.** The right to child participation is inextricably linked with our understanding of children's right to the future because it allows them to actively participate in decisions that impact their lives and the world they will inherit.

By ensuring that their opinions are heard and valued, we not only protect their rights, but also promote a sense of agency and responsibility. **This relationship emphasizes children's critical position as a bridge between the present and the future and as architects of a more fair and sustainable future, as well as the importance of their participation in determining the laws and practices that will define their world.**

Based on the results of our global consultation with children, we have developed a series of recommendations aimed at national governments and the international community to ensure that children's voices are genuinely heard and considered. **While participating in our consultation, children and youth highlighted a variety of issues related to their unique contexts. However, across all countries and regions, the importance of meaningful child participation was a unifying theme.** Therefore, the goal of the recommendations below is to strengthen mechanisms for consulting and involving children and to promote an open and inclusive dialogue that takes into account their unique perspectives and specific needs.

> *I strongly believe in the importance of equal opportunities for all people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. I believe a truly prosperous and just future for all is based on inclusion and mutual respect. In addition, I would like to highlight the importance of environmental sustainability in building our future. We must take action to protect our planet and ensure a healthy and sustainable environment for future generations. In a nutshell, my vision for the future includes equality, inclusion, and care for the environment as fundamental pillars for a prosperous and harmonious society.*
> *(Girl, 18, Guatemala)*

> The right to child participation is inextricably linked with our understanding of children's right to the future because it allows them to actively participate in decisions that impact their lives and the world they will inherit.

> *Children and youth are the most valuable human resources in the world.*
> *(Boy, 16, Ethiopia)*

> *It would be nice if we could make a separate budget for children in our country. Currently, the budget is only provided to the Office of Education, but I think that if we create a budget just for children, it will make a great contribution to improving the welfare of children.*
> *(Girl, 15, South Korea)*

1. INSTITUTIONALIZING CHILD PARTICIPATION

► **ESTABLISHING SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE CHILD PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS:** Governments should institutionalize child participation by creating formal bodies such as children's parliaments, youth councils, and advisory boards. These entities should be given a clear mandate, adequate resources, and the authority to influence policy decisions.

► **INTEGRATING CHILD PARTICIPATION INTO LEGISLATION:** Child participation should be included as a right and principle in local, national and international legislation to ensure that children are involved in all decisions affecting them.

► **APPOINTING A SPECIAL COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' RIGHTS:** A special commissioner within the government or relevant ministry should be appointed to monitor, evaluate, and report on the effectiveness of child participation mechanisms[33].

► **ALLOCATING SPECIFIC RESOURCES TO CHILD PARTICIPATION**[34]: This entails allocating dedicated funds and resources specifically for child participation, enabling children to engage in and influence decision-making processes. This includes earmarked funding for initiatives, activities, and events involving children; support for youth councils and forums; financing for projects designed by children; hiring specialized staff; offering participation training programs; and providing spaces and facilities.

► **ADOPTING INTERGENERATIONAL BUDGETING:** Apply an economic analysis and planning tool that assesses the impact of public and budgetary policies on different generations, with a focus on children and young people. This approach identifies and corrects existing inequalities, ensuring that public resources are allocated fairly across all age groups[35].

2. ENSURING SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION

► **TARGETING GROUPS IN VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED CONDITIONS:** Special efforts must be made to meaningfully include children in marginalized conditions, such as girls and children with disabilities, that are out-of-school, from minority ethnic groups, or living in poverty. Tailored outreach and support programs are necessary to overcome barriers to participation, including the potential of children experiencing violence as a result of their participation, children with unequal domestic responsibilities that limit free time and the lack of appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities. It is also important to acknowledge different cultures and values.

► **PROVIDING CHILD-FRIENDLY INFORMATION:** Governments should ensure that information on policies, rights, and participation opportunities is accessible to children in formats that are age-appropriate and easy to understand. This entails using child-friendly language, employing accessible and inclusive distribution methods, and using multiple media channels. It also involves having age-appropriate conversations without expecting children to 'speak as adults' to be heard, while being mindful of their mental health as they engage with complex topics that affect them now and in the future.

► **ENSURING SAFE AND ETHICAL PARTICIPATION:** Safeguarding principles must be mandatory to ensure participation is both safe and ethical. Children and young people should

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33 In the case of Italy, for example, the Garante per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza (Supervisor for Children and Adolescents) was established in 2011: a figure aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of minors. However, the Garante has mainly a monitoring and advisory role rather than direct executive powers. Therefore, since they can only make recommendations, and cannot set measures and policies, their influence is severely limited. For further information, see: https://www.garanteinfanzia.org .

34 There are several examples of child participatory budgeting from the Latin American and Caribbean region. In Brazil, for example, 30% of the country's mayors participated in the Child Friendly Mayor program between 2009 and 2013. In addition, the municipality of Iguatu, in the state of Ceara, legally established the municipal plan and budget for children proposed by the Child Friendly Mayor program, as well as a mechanism to monitor its implementation. Municipal governments in Honduras have increased their investment in children from 14% between 2006 and 2009 to 23% between 2010 and 2013. 5% of this municipal budget has been allocated to the Child-friendly Municipal Corporation and the implementation of the Corporation's Action Plan (Save the Children, 2022).

35 This recommendation is inspired by gender budgeting, a tool that assesses the gender impact of budgetary policies with a view to identifying and correcting gender inequalities. A practical example is provided by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), which has developed a toolkit to help managing authorities in the European Union to apply gender budgeting tools in the processes of European Union funds under shared management. For more information, see: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-budgeting?language_content_entity=en

feel secure and understand the purpose and nature of the participation process. Participation should always be voluntary, with children and youth knowing whether their contributions will be treated as private or confidential.

▸ **GIVING A SEAT AT THE TABLE TO GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS, CSOs, and Youth-Led Movements**: Civil society is a vital repository and catalyst for diverse claims and perspectives, which should be leveraged. Therefore, to create more inclusive policies that are attentive to the real needs of and representative of all segments of the population, it is essential to involve CSOs, youth-led movements, and child and youth activists at the discussion table.

❝ *Training more teachers and paying them well will create a violence free society.*
(Boy, 15, Sierra Leone)

❝ *I will become a great person in the future if I am educated.*
(Boy, 12, Nepal)

3. INVESTING IN CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING

▸ **EMPOWERING CHILDREN AS RIGHTS HOLDERS:** A prerequisite for child participation is that children recognize themselves as rights holders and understand their rights. By fostering a culture where children are empowered with knowledge of their rights and supported in exercising them, their resilience, optimism, and ability to envision a positive future despite challenges are enhanced. Such interventions should be promoted in school formal and informal curricula.

▸ **TRAINING AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN:** Capacity-strengthening programs should be developed to equip children with the skills and knowledge they need to participate effectively. This includes training in public speaking, advocacy, and the understanding of their rights, as well as incorporating global citizenship education curricula in schools and community programs,

▸ **TRAINING AND SUPPORTING DUTY BEARERS:** Educational programs should be implemented to cultivate a culture of respect for children's views and opinions. Training for main duty bearers, including policymakers, educators, and community and religious leaders, is crucial to shift attitudes and create environments where children feel valued and heard.

▸ **PROVIDING FINANCIAL AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT:** Adequate funding and logistical support should be provided to ensure that children can participate in consultations and decision-making processes. This includes covering travel and other

expenses, providing safe meeting spaces, ensuring accessibility, supporting innovative projects proposed by children themselves, and investing in sub-grant opportunities that allow children to directly implement their projects. Children and young people's time should also be valued – they, too, have other demands and constraints that should be respected and accommodated.

❝ *Just thank you for allowing us to express ourselves.*
(Girl, 15, Burkina Faso)

4. MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

▸ **DEVELOPING INDICATORS FOR CHILD PARTICIPATION:** National governments should develop and implement indicators to monitor the existence and effectiveness of child participation mechanisms. These indicators should be aligned with international standards and best practices to ensure a consistent and accurate assessment of child participation initiatives[36].

▸ **IMPLEMENTING TOOLS FOR GATHERING CHILDREN'S OPINIONS:** Tools for gathering children's feedback and opinions, such as regular surveys and focus groups, should be implemented to solicit their perspectives on specific issues and to evaluate their satisfaction with public services and policies. The outcomes of these consultations should inform the review and adaptation of objectives according to children's evolving needs and expectations.

▸ **CONDUCTING REGULAR EVALUATIONS:** It is crucial to conduct regular evaluations of child participation initiatives to assess their impact and identify areas for improvement. These evaluations should actively involve children in the process and be made publicly available.

▸ **ESTABLISHING FEEDBACK MECHANISMS:** Effective feedback mechanisms should be established to ensure that children receive information on how their input has been applied and the outcomes of their participation. This practice builds trust and underscores the value of their contributions.

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36 The international approach, exemplified by the work of UNICEF, integrates measures of factors that support participation, such as legislation on the voting age, the availability of safe spaces, and prevailing social and cultural norms, with process-based indicators, like the number of young people participating in meetings, organized activities, groups, or governance structures. This approach also includes assessing the impact of children's participation on their well-being. The goal is to determine whether young people have the opportunities and skills to influence decision-making processes, share their perspectives, and participate as citizens and agents of change. For further information, please visit [UNICEF's participation data](https://data.unicef.org/adp/snapshots/participation/).

Joining Forces' Call to Action for Child Participation

In 2017, ChildFund Alliance joined forces with the other five largest child-focused agencies: Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children's Villages International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, and World Vision International[37].

Despite significant progress for children in many areas, their rights continue to face regular challenges. In most countries, effective and systematic implementation of children's participation remains lacking, with many policies and interventions failing to inclusively involve them.

Even in cases where child participation policies and programs exist, they often lack sufficient and sustainable public investment in supporting structures and systems. Simply involving children in decision-making processes is not enough; their demands and needs must be substantiated through adequate funds and investments. Unfortunately, progress often fails to translate into meaningful opportunities for all children to be heard and to fully exercise their participation. In response, we are committed to leveraging our collective power to accelerate change, securing children their rights and ending all forms of violence against them.

In May 2024, Joining Forces officially launched a global Call to Action on children's participation. We are advocating for children to have a seat at the table, actively and meaningfully participating in all matters and decisions affecting their lives as rights holders. This entails providing them with friendly spaces within the chambers of power, rather than merely seeking their views before or after decisions are made, as well as empowering them to be part of the entire decision-making process. Additionally, tools must be implemented to enable children to both implement actions and evaluate the related outcomes.

This call was accompanied by the report *A Seat at the Table: Investing in children's participation as a cornerstone of children's rights*[38] (2024), which, informed by consultations with children in seven countries, calls for greater financial investments and political will from governments and the international community to systematically involve children in decision-making processes. We assert that recognizing children's rights and ensuring the exercise of child participation is crucial for building more peaceful and sustainable communities.

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37   For more information about Joining Forces, see: https://joining-forces.org/about-joining-forces/

38   The Report is available at this link https://joining-forces.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/EN_EXECUTIVE-SUMMARY-A-SEAT-AT-THE-TABLE.pdf

Jake Lyell Photography

What Can the Private Sector Do?

Ensuring greater child participation so that the perspectives, needs, and aspirations of children and youth are genuinely considered and effectively realized is the responsibility of the entire society. In this regard, the private sector has a crucial role to play.

▶ **CREATING SAFE WORKSPACES TO PREVENT CHILD LABOR:**
Establishing child-friendly and safe workspaces is crucial in preventing child labor and ensuring that children are not exploited in the workplace. Companies must adhere to strict labor laws and international standards to eliminate the risk of child labor in their supply chains and operations. Workspaces should prioritize children's safety, well-being, and access to education, while providing clear guidelines on acceptable employment practices for young people (e.g., internships or apprenticeships for older adolescents). Additionally, companies should regularly audit their supply chains to ensure no child labor is involved, especially in industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, and textiles. Providing alternative pathways, such as vocational training and apprenticeships, will allow young people to gain work experience in a safe and supportive environment without risking exploitation

▶ **EMBEDDING CHILD PARTICIPATION INTO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) STRATEGIES:**
Integrating child participation into CSR programs is essential for companies that aim to make a positive impact on children's rights. Companies should include mechanisms for consulting children in the development of their social impact initiatives, ensuring that their views, needs, and priorities are considered when designing projects that target children and youth. These efforts could include regular surveys, focus groups, and child-led campaigns to foster youth engagement in business decisions.

▶ **COMMITTING TO CHILD RIGHTS IN COMPANY POLICIES AND CODES OF CONDUCT:**
Adopting child-centered policies in company frameworks is crucial. Private sector companies should integrate child rights principles into their internal codes of conduct, ensuring that all operations respect and promote children's rights. This includes ensuring that child labor is not involved, promoting safe working conditions for young people in the workplace, and guaranteeing that all products and services designed for children meet safety standards and promote their well-being.

▶ **ALLOCATING RESOURCES FOR YOUTH-DRIVEN INITIATIVES:**
Allocating specific resources for initiatives led by or for children enables businesses to directly empower young people. This can include funding youth-led projects, supporting children in business internships or mentorship programs, and providing resources for initiatives that allow children to take part in entrepreneurial activities. Resources should also be dedicated to training children on topics such as financial literacy, sustainability, and leadership, thus enabling them to become informed contributors to decision-making processes in the future.

▶ **PROVIDING PLATFORMS FOR CHILD-LED ADVOCACY:**
Supporting child-led advocacy groups within the business context can amplify the voices of young people who are passionate about making change. Companies should foster and fund initiatives that allow children to advocate for their rights and lead campaigns that focus on child protection, education, and health. Encouraging children to take leadership roles in advocating for their peers promotes confidence, critical thinking, and community responsibility.

▶ **PROMOTING ETHICAL ADVERTISING AND MARKETING PRACTICES:**
Ensuring ethical marketing to children is essential. Companies should implement policies that prevent exploitative or harmful advertising targeted at children. This includes promoting products and services that are safe, appropriate, and beneficial to children's development. Advertising strategies should be guided by the best interests of children, ensuring that marketing does not manipulate or harm them in any way. Additionally, companies must take responsibility for protecting children's images online, ensuring that any content featuring children respects their dignity and privacy. Children's likenesses should not be used for commercial gain without proper consent, and companies must avoid promoting products or services that encourage harmful behaviors or exploit children's vulnerability, especially on social media platforms.

ANNEXES

Annex 1
Methodology and Technical Notes

Edited by Martina Albini (Research Center Coordinator, WeWorld), Francesco Ariele Piziali (External Consultant)

This technical note outlines the methodology used to calculate the 2024 edition of ChildFund Alliance Global Index on Women's and Children's Rights (CFA Index). The Index ranks 157 countries from 2015 to 2023 combining 30 different indicators. CFA Index — together with the 3 sub-indexes *Context*, *Children* and *Women* — aims at inquiring the implementation of human rights for children and women at the country, regional area and world level.

We revised and improved the methodology introduced for the 2022 edition of the former WeWorld Index. Again, we tracked the absolute performance of territories and assessed their strengths and weaknesses in each feature composing the Index. We calculated scores for 30 indicators, grouped in 15 dimensions, 3 sub-indexes and the overall index on an intuitive 0–100 scale, providing an absolute and relative benchmark with clear best and worst scenarios. In the following sections we detailed the process followed to select the data and compose the Index.

1
Indicators selection

1.1 Data collection

The indicators are chosen to be part of the Index based on their relevance concerning Human Rights implementation from the perspective of children and women. To guarantee statistical integrity, we select indicators that lack as few observations as possible. Compared to the previous edition of the Index we changed 10 out of 30 indicators.[1]

Data for the 30 selected indicators come from various sources. We retrieved 26 indicators from the WorldBank database, the remainder directly from the source. For a detailed list of the indicators, their definitions and sources refer to Tables 2 to 4. All data used are the most recent available as of June 30, 2024.

1.2 Missing values imputation

Missing values imputation covers a key step in the calculation of the Index. The absence of data may be attributed to several factors, including a lack of coverage by the data source, incomplete reporting by the country to international organisations, or outdated data. On the one hand, one tries not to over-modify the available data sample, on the other hand, in order to obtain a composite index value, it is necessary to fill in all missing data.

We impute missing data before calculation, trying to balance the two

objectives mentioned. The data sample to be used in the calculation for each territory and year (2015–2023) under consideration was determined as follows:

1. if present we take the original observation;

2. if the observation is missing from the sample, a linear interpolation is performed to fill in the missing value from the neighbouring observations or, if also missing, the last available observation is propagated forward and backwards for a maximum of 5 years;[2]

3. when a territory still lacks more than 6 indicators we exclude it from the calculation for the present year, otherwise the missing indicators are imputed from the area average for the indicator.[3]

1.3 Data transformations

Some transformations were necessary before normalising the indicators to the same scale. Some indicators needed either to be capped by setting a clear cut-off value or to be transformed to reduce the effect of extreme values that may affect the normalisation. In this second scenario, we address skewed distributions using a log transformation or a square root transformation. This methodology allows us to retain the distinctive variations in performance between countries while creating a more balanced distribution that is less

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1 Specifically, we replaced indicators 2, 3, 4, 12, 14, 15, 21, 23, 26, 27. Indicator 13 is the old indicator 14.

2 The interpolation is performed only in the presence of missing values preceded and followed by a valid observation. Example: if the data for 2018 and 2019 are present, but all subsequent data are missing, the last observation is simply propagated forward.

3 Area averages are calculated by weighting the available data based on the population of each territory in the area.

extreme.

1.3.1 Capped indicators

We impose a top cut-off on three indicators:

- indicator 2 is capped at 200 %;
- indicator 16 is capped at 10 %;
- indicator 24 is capped at 100 %.

We considered larger values of these indicators unrepresentative for aggregation purposes.

1.3.2 Log transformation

The logarithm transformation reduces the right side of the distribution when the indicator's range of values is wide or positively skewed. We transformed according to the following function indicators 1, 8, 11, 12, 19, 21, 30:

$$x' = \ln(x + 1) \qquad (1)$$

where x is the raw data and x' is the transformed data. The addition of a positive constant ensures that we can take the logarithm of all values within the distribution, including zeros, while preserving almost the same relative differences between countries.

1.3.3 Square root transformation

Square root transformation has the same objective as the previous one, but has less impact on data distribution. It is important to note that these extreme values should not be considered erroneous, but preserved as a distinguishing feature of the countries they describe. We transformed according to the following function indicators 2, 20, 27 and 29:

$$x' = \sqrt{x} \qquad (2)$$

where x is the raw data and x' is the transformed data.

2
Index calculation

2.1 Normalization

All indicators are normalised using the min-max transformation with boundaries set at the indicator level. We establish these boundaries, reported in Table 5, in two possible ways:

- theoretical best and worst values;

- maximum and minimum values recorded across the time series from 2005 to 2023.

This type of normalisation allows for tracking the absolute trend and comparing territories not only within a single year but also over time.

In this manner, we can translate each indicator on a positively oriented 0–100 scale, according to the following transformations:

$$x' = \begin{cases} 100 \cdot \dfrac{x - x_{min}}{x_{max} - x_{min}} & \text{, if } x \text{ is positively oriented} \\[2ex] 100 \cdot \left(1 - \dfrac{x - x_{min}}{x_{max} - x_{min}}\right) & \text{, if } x \text{ is negatively oriented} \\[2ex] 100 \cdot \left(1 - \left|\dfrac{x - x_{min}}{x_{max} - x_{min}}\right|\right) & \text{, if } x \text{ is double oriented} \end{cases} \qquad (3)$$

where x is the indicator value, x_{min} and x_{max} are its normalisation boundaries and x' is the normalised indicator score.

2.2 Aggregation

The Index of each territory is computed by aggregating the indicators' scores in a hybrid fashion, which consists of three sub-steps of aggregation. First, we calculate the dimensions scores by taking the unweighted arithmetic mean of the two indicators within each dimension. Then, to avoid full compensability we employed the geometric mean cross dimensions and sub-indexes. In this way, a deficiency in one feature cannot be fully or partially compensated for by surpluses in another. Specifically, dimensions scores D_i, sub-indexes scores S_j and the final index I are computed as follows:

$$D_i = \frac{x_1 + x_2}{2} \qquad (4a)$$

$$S_j = \sqrt[5]{D_1 \cdot D_2 \cdot D_3 \cdot D_4 \cdot D_5} \qquad (4b)$$

$$I = \sqrt[3]{S_1 \cdot S_2 \cdot S_3} \qquad (4c)$$

where $x1$ and $x2$ are the scores of the two indicators within each dimension, D_i is one of the five dimensions within each sub-index and S_j is one of the three sub-indexes that form the final index I of a territory.

2.3 Areas and world scores

To assess areas and world performance on the Index we first compute the population-weighted averages for each indicator; then, we aggregate these values with the same procedure outlined above for actual countries. All the countries for which we have data are taken into consideration to compute indicator values for areas and the world, even the ones excluded from the Index because of too many missing values. In this way, we obtain regional and world scores for each feature of the Index.

2.4 Human Rights Implementation Groups

To get an immediate overview of the performance of each territory we divide them into six tiers based on score s obtained in the Index according to the intervals reported in Table 1. We provide tiers for Context, Children and Women Sub-indexes scores as well. This division allows us to easily compare groups between years since the underlying scale remains the same. These tiers are employed in calculating the total children and women population in each group for every year taken into exam.

Table 1
Intervals adopted to group territories

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION	INTERVAL
Advanced	$s \geq 85$
Strong	$75 \leq s < 85$
Moderate	$65 \leq s < 75$
Basic	$55 \leq s < 65$
Limited	$45 \leq s < 55$
Minimal	$s < 45$

2.5 Years left

Comparing values calculated for the different time steps, we can assess a rough projection of the variation rate of the Index and the Sub-indexes at the world level. We **compute the average variation rate between 2015 and 2023 and then assess the num**ber of years still needed to reach a score value of 100 from the present situation.

It is important to note that this method assumes the variation rate as constant over time and, especially, cannot provide an estimate if the variation rate is negative.

3
Final remarks

The Index aims to assess the multifaceted aspects of women's and children's inclusion in society by evaluating the implementation of fundamental human rights across different territories. However, it is undoubtedly difficult to fully capture the complexity of these concepts for different reasons.

First of all the indicators we chose in many of the dimensions we try to grasp are not perfect and do not measure certain aspects of the phenomenon. It is therefore crucial to further investigate relationships and correlations among these indicators. Secondly, the arbitrary choices made in the normalisation and aggregation process determine the outcome. Lastly, country performance is ultimately dependent upon the quality and availability of data published by other sources.

Despite the mentioned weaknesses — common to all composite indices — the Index can serve as a reference to assess the relative performance of territories and identify specific areas of strength and weakness. Moreover, the scoring on a 0–100 scale, as opposed to the previously employed z-score normalisation, provides an intuitive benchmark to track over time relative and absolute variations of each of the features under consideration.

4
Indicators information

The following tables provide all the relevant data concerning definition, sources and normalisation process for the indicators employed in the construction of the Index.

Table 2
Indicators Summary

SUB-INDEX	DIMENSION	INDICATOR	NAME
	ENVIRONMENT	1	CO2 emissions per capita
		2	Level of water stress
	HOUSING	3	People using safely managed drinking water services
		4	People using safely managed sanitation services
CONTEXT SUB-INDEX	CONFLICTS AND WARS	5	Global Peace Index
		6	Refugees per country of origin
	DEMOCRACY AND SAFETY	7	Global Democracy Index
		8	Intentional homicide rate
	ACCESS TO INFORMATION	9	People with access to electricity
		10	Individuals using Internet
	CHILDREN'S HEALTH	11	Under-five mortality rate
		12	Adolescent mortality rate
	CHILDREN'S EDUCATION	13	Lower secondary completion rate
		14	Share of youth not in education, employment or training
CHILDREN'S SUB-INDEX	CHILDREN'S HUMAN CAPITAL	15	Population covered by at least one social protection benefit
		16	Government expenditure on education
	CHILDREN'S ECONOMIC CAPITAL	17	Unemployment rate
		18	Poverty headcount ratio at $6.85 a day (2017 PPP$)
	VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN	19	Children out of school
		20	Adolescent fertility rate
	WOMEN'S HEALTH	21	Lifetime risk of maternal mortality
		22	Life expectancy at birth, female
	WOMEN'S EDUCATION	23	Educational attainment (upper secondary), female
		24	Tertiary school enrolment (gross), female
WOMEN'S SUB-INDEX	WOMEN'S ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	25	Vulnerable employment, female
		26	Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate
	WOMEN'S DECISION-MAKING PARTICIPATION	27	Women in ministerial level position
		28	Women in senior and middle management positions
	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	29	Intimate partner violence, female
		30	Intentional homicide rate, female

Table 3
Indicators unit, update and source with link

INDICATOR	UNIT	LAST UPDATE	SOURCE
1	tonne	Climate Watch	2020
2	%	FAO	2020
3	%	UNICEF, WHO	2022
4	%	UNICEF, WHO	2022
5	score (5-1)	Vision of Humanity	2023
6	%	UNHCR	2023
7	score (0-10)	Economist Intelligent Unit	2022
8	per 100000 people	UNODC	2021
9	%	IEA, World Bank	2022
10	%	ITU	2022
11	per 1000 live births	UN IGME	2022
12	per 1000 people ages 15-19	UN IGME	2022
13	% of relevant age group	UNESCO	2023
14	% of youth population	ILO	2023
15	%	ILO	2023
16	% GDP	UNESCO	2023
17	%	ILO	2023
18	%	World Bank	2023
19	% of primary school age	UNESCO	2023
20	per 1000 women ages 15-19	UN Population Division	2022
21	%	WHO	2020
22	years	UN Population Division	2022
23	% of female ages 25+	UNESCO	2023
24	%	UNESCO	2023
25	% of female employment	World Bank, ILO	2022
26	female to male ratio (%)	World Bank, ILO	2023
27	%	Inter-Parliamentary Union	2022
28	%	ILO	2023
29	%	IHME	2023
30	per 100000 female	UNODC	2021

Table 4
Indicators definition

INDICATOR	DEFINITION
1	Carbon dioxide emissions are those stemming from the burning of fossil fuels and the manufacture of cement. They include carbon dioxide produced during consumption of solid, liquid, and gas fuels and gas flaring.
2	Freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources is the ratio between total freshwater withdrawn by all major sectors and total renewable freshwater resources, after taking into account environmental water requirements.
3	Percentage of people using drinking water from an improved source that is accessible on premises, available when needed and free from faecal and priority chemical contamination. Improved water sources include piped water, boreholes or tubewells, protected dug wells, protected springs, and packaged or delivered water.
4	Percentage of people using improved sanitation facilities that are not shared with other households and where excreta are safely disposed of in situ or transported and treated offsite. Improved sanitation facilities include flush/pour flush to piped sewer systems, septic tanks or pit latrines: ventilated improved pit latrines, compositing toilets or pit latrines with slabs.
5	Quantification of the absence of violence or the fear of violence to assess a nation's level of peace. This lack of violence is defined as Negative Peace. A higher GPI represents a higher level of violence in a country.
6	Refugees are people who are recognized as refugees under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, people recognized as refugees in accordance with the UNHCR statute, people granted refugee-like humanitarian status, and people provided temporary protection. Asylum seekers are excluded. Country of origin generally refers to the nationality or country of citizenship of a claimant.
7	The Democracy Index is based on 60 indicators, grouped into five categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation and political culture.
8	Intentional homicides are estimates of unlawful homicides purposely inflicted as a result of domestic disputes, interpersonal violence, violent conflicts over land resources, intergang violence over turf or control, and predatory violence and killing by armed groups. Intentional homicide does not include all intentional killing; the difference is usually in the organization of the killing.
9	Access to electricity is the percentage of population with access to electricity. Electrification data are collected from industry, national surveys and international sources.
10	Internet users are individuals who have used the Internet (from any location) in the last 3 months. The Internet can be used via a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV etc.
11	Under-five mortality rate is the probability per 1,000 that a newborn baby will die before reaching age five, if subject to age-specific mortality rates of the specified year.
12	Probability of dying between age 15-19 years of age expressed per 1,000 adolescents aged 15, if subject to age-specific mortality rates of the specified year.
13	Lower secondary education completion rate is measured as the gross intake ratio to the last grade of lower secondary education (general and pre-vocational). It is calculated as the number of new entrants in the last grade of lower secondary education, regardless of age, divided by the population at the entrance age for the last grade of lower secondary education.
14	Share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) is the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment, or training to the population of the corresponding age group: youth (ages 15 to 24); persons ages 15 to 29; or both age groups.
15	Share of the population effectively covered by a social protection system, including social protection floors such as child and maternity benefits, support for persons without a job, persons with disabilities, victims of work injuries and older persons.
16	General government expenditure on education (current, capital, and transfers) is expressed as a percentage of GDP. It includes expenditure funded by transfers from international sources to government. General government usually refers to local, regional and central governments.
17	Unemployment refers to the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment. Definitions of labor force and unemployment differ by country.
18	Poverty headcount ratio at $6.85 a day is the percentage of the population living on less than $6.85 a day at 2017 international prices.
19	Children out of school are the percentage of primary-school-age children who are not enrolled in primary or secondary school. Children in the official primary age group that are in preprimary education should be considered out of school.
20	Adolescent fertility rate is the number of births per 1,000 women ages 15-19.
21	Life time risk of maternal death is the probability that a 15-year-old female will die eventually from a maternal cause assuming that current levels of fertility and mortality (including maternal mortality) do not change in the future, taking into account competing causes of death.
22	Life expectancy at birth indicates the number of years a newborn infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life.
23	Percentage of population ages 25 and over that attained or completed upper secondary education.
24	Gross enrollment ratio is the ratio of total enrollment, regardless of age, to the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. Tertiary education, whether or not to an advanced research qualification, normally requires, as a minimum condition of admission, the successful completion of education at the secondary level.
25	Vulnerable employment is contributing family workers and own-account workers as a percentage of total employment.
26	Labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period. Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate is calculated by dividing female labor force participation rate by male labor force participation rate and multiplying by 100.
27	Women in ministerial level positions is the proportion of women in ministerial or equivalent positions (including deputy prime ministers) in the government. Prime Ministers/Heads of Government are included when they hold ministerial portfolios. Vice-Presidents and heads of govern- mental or public agencies are excluded.
28	Female share of employment in managerial positions conveys the number of women in management as a percentage of employment in management. Employment in management is defined based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations.
29	Share of women, aged 15 years and older, who experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in the past year.
30	Intentional homicides, female are estimates of unlawful female homicides purposely inflicted as a result of domestic disputes, interpersonal violence, violent conflicts over land resources, intergang violence over turf or control, and predatory violence and killing by armed groups. Intentional homicide does not include all intentional killing; the difference is usually in the organization of the killing.

Table 5
Specifications for the normalisation of indicators

INDICATOR	INVERTED	BEST TYPE	WORST TYPE	BEST VALUE	WORST VALUE	TRANSFORMATION	CAPPED
1	yes	best	worst	0.0216	45.9	log	no
2	yes	best	theoretical	0.0272	200	sqrt	yes
3	no	theoretical	worst	100	3		no
4	no	theoretical	worst	100	1.45		no
5	yes	theoretical	theoretical	1	5		no
6	yes	best	worst	7.75e-06	34.8	log	no
7	no	theoretical	theoretical	10	0		no
8	yes	best	worst	0	108	log	no
9	no	theoretical	worst	100	0.792		no
10	no	theoretical	worst	100	0		no
11	yes	best	worst	1.88	198	log	no
12	yes	best	worst	0.792	40.8	log	no
13	double	theoretical parity	worst	100	6.74		no
14	yes	theoretical	worst	0	69.3		no
15	no	theoretical	worst	100	0.891		no
16	no	theoretical	worst	10	0.126	log	yes
17	yes	theoretical	worst	0	37.7		no
18	yes	theoretical	worst	0	99.2		no
19	yes	theoretical	worst	0	65	log	no
20	yes	best	worst	0.867	206	sqrt	no
21	yes	best	worst	0.00149	9.11	log	no
22	no	best	worst	88.6	42.9		no
23	no	theoretical	worst	100	0		no
24	no	theoretical	worst	100	0.174		yes
25	yes	theoretical	worst	0	99.4		no
26	double	theoretical parity	worst	100	6.92		no
27	double	theoretical parity	worst	50	0	sqrt	no
28	double	theoretical parity	worst	50	1.18		no
29	yes	best	worst	2.36	51.7	sqrt	no
30	yes	best	worst	0	19.8	log	no

5
Descriptive statistics of the Index

The following table provides for each feature of the Index descriptive statistics based on the sample of all countries over 2015–2023, consisting of 1458 total counts.

Table 6
Descriptive statistics for each feature of the Index

	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
CFA Index	62.5	16.6	23.1	91.3
Context Sub-index	64.8	14.8	22.3	92.7
Children Sub-index	63.6	18.1	25.3	93.9
Women Sub-index	59.9	18.3	19.3	91.1
Environment	68.3	18.8	4.69	98.6
Housing	57.6	28.8	5.72	100
Conflicts and wars	85.1	9.39	31.9	97.7
Democracy and safety	61.6	15.9	24.1	95.3
Access to information	71.4	25.7	3.52	99.8
Children's health	63.4	21.4	15.3	96.7
Children's education	72.3	16.9	27.8	97.4
Children's human capital	56.6	20	17.8	95.4
Children's economic capital	70.5	18.5	24.5	97.7
Violence against children	60.5	20.8	9.24	97.5
Women's health	77.3	18.6	15.2	97.4
Women's education	46.6	28.5	1.9	97.4
Women's economic opportunities	64.4	17.7	12.3	93.2
Women's decision-making participation	60.8	17.1	3.4	95.6
Violence against women	68.3	14.1	31.8	97.1

Annex 2
Methodology and Technical Notes Global Consultation Analysis

Edited by Erika Conti (Global Data Analyst, WeWorld), Martina Albini (Research Center Coordinator, WeWorld)

1
Sampling

The global consultation engaged over 11,000 children, resulting in a final clean dataset of 11,014 participants, where the language, country, and organization collecting the data were consistent.

The initial sampling technique employed was convenience sampling, based on the operational areas of ChildFund Alliance. For details on the data collected from each organization, refer to Appendix 1, Tables 1 and 2.

Although the consultation did not aim to achieve statistical significance with respect to the child and adolescent populations in the interviewed countries, a proportional resampling of the original dataset was performed to mitigate biases inherent in convenience sampling. For instance, oversampling occurred in some countries where multiple ChildFund Alliance organizations operate. This resampling technique aims to correct for such sample biases, ensuring a more representative reflection of the voices of children and adolescents, aligned with the general population demographics of the surveyed countries.

The resampling was conducted using a bootstrapping technique with replacement, wherein each entry from the original dataset had a probability of being resampled according to its weight. The weights (wi) for each entry were calculated based on the proportion of the child's country and gender (its stratum) within the population under 18 years old in the participating countries.

$$w_i = \frac{\% \ of \ stratus \ in \ the \ population}{\% \ of \ stratus \ in \ the \ sample}$$

This technique aims to correct sample bias, based on over or under sampling in certain countries. The length of the new sample has been set to 10,000. For the distribution for each country and gender after the resampling see appendix 1, table 3.

2
Creation of new aggregated variables

2.1 Migratory background variable

The variable combines two questions regarding the residency of the child:

1. *Were you born in the same country where you live now?*

2. *Were your parents or the people you live with born in the same country where you live now?*

If the child answered affirmatively to at least one of these questions, they are designated as having a migratory background, encompassing both first- and second-generation migrants.

2.2 Minority variable

Three questions concerning linguistic, religious, and ethnic minorities were asked to the children:

1. *Do you speak the same language as people in your country?*

2. *Do you practice the same religion as people in your country?*

3. *Do you belong to an indigenous, aboriginal, or native community?*

To simplify the analysis, a reliability analysis was conducted to determine whether it is appropriate to consider these variables as three aspects of a single variable. A Cronbach's alpha analysis was performed on the three variables (see Appendix 1). The results indicated that the indigenous origin variable lowers the reliability of the other two variables. This means that children who reported belonging to an indigenous community often did not also report belonging to a religious or linguistic minority. In contrast, the linguistic and religious minority variables exhibited more coherence. Consequently, these two variables were used to create a new composite variable, "minority," wherein a child is considered to belong to a minority if they answered positively to at least one of the two questions.

2.3 Socio-economic variable

Another set of questions aimed to investigate the current socio-economic aspects of children's living conditions through a series of questions, which included the following:

1. *Do you attend school regularly?*

2. *Do you have a school uniform or clothing that is new or in good condition?*

3. *Do you have school supplies?*

4. *Do you have an internet connection?*

5. *Do you work currently?*

6. *Do you usually feel full after every meal?*

A reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, as detailed in Appendix 1, Table 4. The analysis revealed that some variables, specifically those related to work and internet connection, were not consistent with the other variables. In contrast, the remaining variables exhibited coherence, indicating that children who responded positively (or negatively) to one question tended to respond similarly to the others.

Based on these findings, a new composite variable was created to categorize the socio-economic profile of children. A child is considered to have a "high" socio-economic profile if they attend school regularly, have a school uniform or clothing in good condition, possess school supplies, and usually feel full after every meal. Conversely, if a child does not meet one or more of these criteria, they are classified as having a "low" socio-economic profile.

2.4 Children perception as rights holders

A rights perception variable was created to measure the strength of children's perceptions of their rights.

Children were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a scale—ranging from totally agree, mostly agree, little agree, to not agree at all—with a series of rights outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which are internationally recognized as children's rights.

In your opinion children have the right to:

Be listened to
Express their opinion
Go to school and receive an education
Have access to water and food
Play and be with other children
Live in a clean, healthy and sustainable natural environment
Have access to safe housing
Live in good health and receive adequate care
Have a family
Be protected from all forms of violence
Have access to the Internet
Not be treated differently because of your gender, origin, religion, disability, etc.
Have a future

To create a combined measure for this group of questions, a point was assigned for each positive answer (totally agree or mostly agree) to the respective right. This resulted in a metric for each child ranging from 0 (none of the rights acknowledged) to 13 (all the rights acknowledged). The metric exhibited high skewness towards the upper end of the scale, indicating a generally high recognition of rights among children. Based on this distribution, two classes were identified: children scoring 12 to 13 points were categorized into the strong rights perception class, while those scoring 11 or lower were categorized into the weak rights perception class.

2.5 Adults' promotion of children's rights

Similarly to the rights perception variable, a variable was created by aggregating children's responses to gauge the promotion of children's rights by the adults around them. This variable is categorized into high, moderate, or low levels of promotion.

The aggregated group of questions were as follows:

Thinking about your life and experience, do adults around you do these things for children and youth?:

1. They are committed to guaranteeing them a better future.
2. They ask for their opinion.
3. They ensure that they can play and be together with other children.
4. They ensure that they go to school and receive an education.
5. They ensure that they live in a clean, healthy, and sustainable natural environment.
6. They ensure that they have a family.
7. They ensure that they have access to safe housing.
8. They ensure that they have access to the internet.
9. They listen to them and try to understand them.
10. They protect their health and provide the care they need when they are ill.
11. They protect them from any kind of violence and mistreatment.
12. They treat everyone the same.

A point was assigned to each positive answer (totally or mostly agree) to the questions, creating a metric on a scale from 0 to 12 for each child. Based on their scores, children were categorized as follows:

➤ High promotion level class: 11 to 12 points

➤ Moderate promotion level class: 8 to 10 points

➤ Low promotion level class: 7 points or lower

3
Quantitative text analysis and sentiment analysis

3.1 Quantitative text analysis

The sample of textual responses considered all 11014 open-ended answers, first collected in 40 languages, then translated into English to homogenize the text analysis. The 'quanteda' package was mainly used for quantitative text analysis using R software.

Pre-processing the text involved the following steps:

1. Creation of a corpus of text from the individual open-ended answers

2. Tokenization: Removing punctuation, lowercase text, and eliminating "stop words"

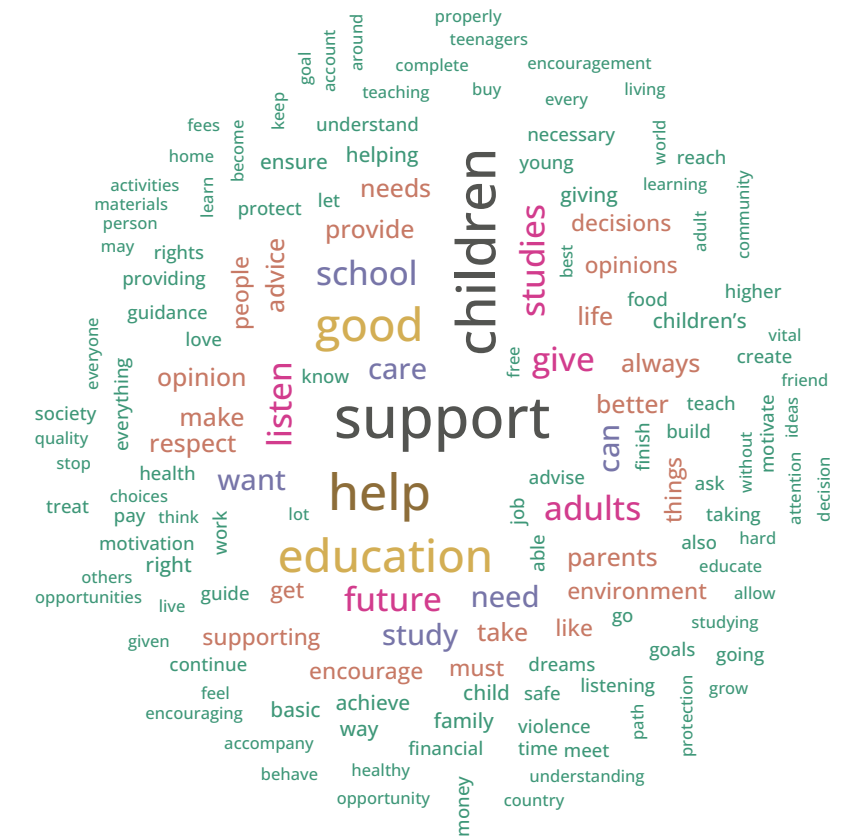3. Stemming: reduction of terms in their root.

At the end of the cleaning operations, 8723 responses can be used for analysis.

The most common words are:

1. help

2. Support children

3. Good education

4. Listen give future studies us

5. School care need

6. Provide, advice, opinions, decision, encouragment, environment, respect.

Figure 1

Word bubble of the most common words cited

3.2 Sentiment analysis

Sentiment analysis gives an emotional indication to the tone of the document (single response) by assigning two values 'positive' or 'negative' with respect to the identification of words within the text.

The sentiment analysis was always set up on the R software using the sentiment database within the 'tidytext' package.

```
sentiment sentiment_score
    <chr>            <dbl>
 1 negative            834
 2 positive           7889
```

The tone of the answers is predominantly positive (90%).

Identifying at least a wider range of emotions, the following sentiment database was used

This dataset was published in Saif M. Mohammad and Peter Turney. (2013), ``Crowdsourcing a Word-Emotion Association Lexicon." Computational Intelligence, 29(3): 436-465.

3.3 Result of the analysis

```
   sentiment    documents percentage
   <chr>              <int>     <dbl>
 1 positive            6610      87.6
 2 trust               5588      74.0
 3 joy                 3791      50.2
 4 anticipation        3168      42.0
 5 surprise            1766      23.4
 6 negative            1075      14.2
 7 fear                 894      11.8
 8 anger                744      9.86
 9 sadness              625      8.28
10 disgust              361      4.78
```

An overlapping between emotions within the responses has been identified so the % distribution of emotions is not 100%. The percentage is to be understood as the presence of emotion within the total number of responses. The most expressed positive emotion is trust while the negative emotion is fear.

Appendix 1

📊 Table 1
Data collected for each organization in ChildFund Alliance

ChildFund International	6216
WeWorld	1775
Educo	1730
Children Believe	392
ChildFund Korea	340
ChildFund Australia	191
Un Enfant Par La Main	159
ChildFund Japan	110
ChildFund New Zealand	50
Barnfonden	39
ChldFund Deutschland	12
Total	11014

📊 Table 2
Original data per country and gender

COUNTRIES	BOY	GIRL	I PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	DISTRIBUTION
Argentina	17	19	2	0,3%
Bangladesh	90	127		2,0%
Benin	134	217	2	3,2%
Bolivia	46	57	2	1,0%
Brazil	781	890	14	15,3%
Burkina Faso	30	34		0,6%
Cambodia	213	289	1	4,6%
Korea, Republic of	138	199	3	3,1%
Ecuador	305	346	4	5,9%
El Salvador	104	166	5	2,5%
Etiopia	136	116	2	2,3%
Philippines	256	371	11	5,8%
France	22	62	1	0,8%
Gambia	42	49	1	0,8%
Ghana	23	32		0,5%
Guatemala	217	270	3	4,4%
Haiti	34	20		0,5%
Honduras	77	129	1	1,9%
India	695	859	3	14,1%
Indonesia	43	85	4	1,2%
Italy	60	33	7	0,9%
Kenya	164	170	2	3,1%
Lebanon	34	41		0,7%
Madagascar	4	16		0,2%
Mali	22	29		0,5%
Mexico	129	192	9	3,0%
Moldova, Republic of	9	15		0,2%
Mozambique	27	32		0,5%
Nepal	29	32		0,6%
Niger	74	80		1,4%
Paraguay	15	50	1	0,6%
Senegal	120	130	2	2,3%
Sierra Leone	19	15		0,3%
Spain	6	7		0,1%
Sri Lanka	364	472	7	7,7%
Sweden	13	25	1	0,4%
Tanzania, United Republic of	100	98		1,8%
Thailand	29	33		0,6%
Uganda	182	188		3,4%
Vietnam	9	17		0,2%
Zambia	44	54	4	0,9%
Grand Total	**4856**	**6066**	**92**	**100%**

Table 3
New sample after resampling

COUNTRIES	BOY	GIRL	DISTRIBUTION
Argentina	62	74	1%
Bangladesh	300	277	6%
Benin	26	39	1%
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	26	17	0%
Brazil	283	267	6%
Burkina Faso	65	60	1%
Cambodia	32	44	1%
Ecuador	28	20	0%
El Salvador	6	14	0%
Ethiopia	304	295	6%
France	57	58	1%
Gambia	6	3	0%
Ghana	91	90	2%
Guatemala	36	33	1%
Haiti	19	28	0%
Honduras	25	17	0%
India	1605	1212	28%
Indonesia	447	403	9%
Italy	56	45	1%
Kenya	138	127	3%
Korea, Republic of	40	44	1%
Lebanon	36	39	1%
Madagascar	71	70	1%
Mali	83	60	1%
Mexico	211	191	4%
Moldova, Republic of	15	8	0%
Mozambique	82	101	2%
Nepal	60	54	1%
Niger	87	69	2%
Paraguay	14	12	0%
Philippines	245	228	5%
Senegal	45	52	1%
Sierra Leone	25	28	1%
Spain	45	48	1%
Sri Lanka	27	38	1%
Sweden	13	11	0%
Tanzania, United Republic of	67	58	1%
Thailand	127	122	2%
Uganda	182	173	4%
Viet Nam	144	135	3%
Zambia	52	53	1%
Grand Total	**5283**	**4717**	**100%**

Table 4
Reliability analysis for constructing the socio-economic variable

Reliability analisis:

Call: alpha(x = minority2)

raw_alpha	std.alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd	median_r
0.41	0.42	0.33	0.19	0.72	0.01	0.31	0.31	0.16

95% confidence boundaries
lower alpha upper
Feldt   0.39 0.41 0.43
Duhachek 0.39 0.41 0.43

Reliability if an item is dropped:

	raw_alpha	std. alpha	G6(smc)
Do you speak a different language than the majority of people in your country	0.28	0.28	0.16
Do you practice a different religion than the majority of people in your country	0.27	0.27	0.15
Do you belong to an indigenous native aboriginal community	0.42	0.42	0.26

The Cronbach alpha index of 0.41 indicates a low to moderate association between the variables. The variable on indigenouse or native community seems not so consistent as the other two. The reliability (raw alpha) if the item is drop is almost unchanged.

Table 5
Reliability analysis for constructing the socio-economic variable

Reliability analisis:

Call: alpha(x = socio, check.keys = TRUE)

raw_alpha	std.alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd	median_r
0.64	0.56	0.58	0.17	1.3	0.0054	0.81	0.22	0.23

Reliability if an item is dropped:

	raw_alpha	std. alpha	G6(smc)
Do you work now	0.67	0.69	0.66
Do you go to school regularly	0.59	0.52	0.53
Do you have school uniform or clothes that are new	0.53	0.41	0.44
Do you have school supplies	0.51	0.39	0.41
Do you have an Internet connection	0.65	0.51	0.55
Do you usually feel full after every meal	0.59	0.47	0.52

The Cronbach alpha index of 0.64 indicates a moderate association between the variables. The variable on work and internet access tend to decrease the internal consistency between the variables. (Internal consistency, as measured by the raw_alpha index, increases without these two variables.) The model is reproduced without the two variables, reporting a final value of 0.7.

Reliability analysis

Call: alpha(x = socio, check.keys = TRUE)

raw_alpha	std.alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd
median_r							
0.7	0.7	0.65	0.37	2.3	0.0048	0.8	0.26
0.36							

95% confidence boundaries
lower alpha upper
Feldt   0.69 0.7 0.71
Duhachek 0.69 0.7 0.71

Sources

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Annex 3
Geographic Areas*

Central and West Africa
Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

East and South Africa
Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoro Islands, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Middle East and North Africa
Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Israel.

East Asia and Pacific
Brunei, Cambodia, China, Democratic Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Fiji, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, East Timor, Vietnam, Japan, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands.

East Europe and Central Asia
Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

South Asia
Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.

Latin America and Caribbean
Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela.

West Europe and Other States
Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United Stated, Canada, Australia, New Zealand.

* The geographical areas reported here have been established in the WeWorld Index to make estimates to fill in for missing data and do not necessarily correspond to commonly recognized areas.

Annex 4
ChildFund Alliance World Index Indicators

SUB-INDEX	DIMENSION	INDICATOR	DEFINITION	SOURCE
CONTEXT SUB-INDEX	**ENVIRONMENT**	1 - CO2 emissions per capita	Carbon dioxide emissions are those stemming from the burning of fossil fuels and the manufacture of cement. They include carbon dioxide produced during consumption of solid, liquid, and gas fuels and gas flaring.	Climate Watch, 2022
		2 - Level of water stress	Freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources is the ratio between total freshwater withdrawn by all major sectors and total renewable freshwater resources, after taking into account environmental water requirements.	FAO, 2020
	HOUSING	3 - People using safely managed drinking water services	Percentage of people using drinking water from an improved source that is accessible on premises, available when needed and free from faecal and priority chemical contamination. Improved water sources include piped water, boreholes or tubewells, protected dug wells, protected springs, and packaged or delivered water.	UNICEF, WHO, 2022
		4 - People using safely managed sanitation services	Percentage of people using improved sanitation facilities that are not shared with other households and where excreta are safely disposed of in situ or transported and treated offsite. Improved sanitation facilities include flush/pour flush to piped sewer systems, septic tanks or pit latrines: ventilated improved pit latrines, compositing toilets or pit latrines with slabs.	UNICEF, WHO, 2022
	CONFLICTS AND WARS	5 - Global Peace Index	Quantification of the absence of violence or the fear of violence to assess a nation's level of peace. This lack of violence is defined as Negative Peace. A higher GPI represents a higher level of violence in a country.	Vision of Humanity, 2023
		6 - Refugees per country of origin	Refugees are people who are recognized as refugees under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, people recognized as refugees in accordance with the UNHCR statute, people granted refugee-like humanitarian status, and people provided temporary protection. Asylum seekers are excluded. Country of origin generally refers to the nationality or country of citizenship of a claimant.	UNHCR, 2023
	DEMOCRACY AND SAFETY	7 - Global Democracy Index	The Democracy Index is based on 60 indicators, grouped into five categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation and political culture.	Economist Intelligent Unit, 2022
		8 - Intentional homicide rate	Intentional homicides are estimates of unlawful homicides purposely inflicted as a result of domestic disputes, interpersonal violence, violent conflicts over land resources, intergang violence over turf or control, and predatory violence and killing by armed groups. Intentional homicide does not include all intentional killing; the difference is usually in the organization of the killing.	UNODC, 2021
	ACCESS TO INFORMATION	9 - People with access to electricity	Access to electricity is the percentage of population with access to electricity. Electrification data are collected from industry, national surveys and international sources	IEA, World Bank
		10 - Individuals using Internet	Internet users are individuals who have used the Internet (from any location) in the last 3 months. The Internet can be used via a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV etc.	ITU, 2022
CHILDREN'S SUB-INDEX	**CHILDREN'S HEALTH**	11 - Under-five mortality rate	Under-five mortality rate is the probability per 1,000 that a newborn baby will die before reaching age five, if subject to age-specific mortality rates of the specified year.	UN IGME, 2022
		12 - Adolescent mortality rate	Probability of dying between age 15-19 years of age expressed per 1,000 adolescents aged 15, if subject to age-specific mortality rates of the specified year.	UN IGME, 2022
	CHILDREN'S EDUCATION	13 - Lower secondary completion rate	Lower secondary education completion rate is measured as the gross intake ratio to the last grade of lower secondary education (general and pre-vocational). It is calculated as the number of new entrants in the last grade of lower secondary education, regardless of age, divided by the population at the entrance age for the last grade of lower secondary education.	UNESCO, 2023
		14 - Share of youth not in education, employment or training	Share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) is the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment, or training to the population of the corresponding age group: youth (ages 15 to 24); persons ages 15 to 29; or both age groups.	ILO, 2023
	CHILDREN'S HUMAN CAPITAL	15 - Population covered by at least one social protection benefit	Share of the population effectively covered by a social protection system, including social protection floors such as child and maternity benefits, support for persons without a job, persons with disabilities, victims of work injuries and older persons.	ILO, 2023
		16 - Government expenditure on education	General government expenditure on education (current, capital, and transfers) is expressed as a percentage of GDP. It includes expenditure funded by transfers from international sources to government. General government usually refers to local, regional and central governments.	UNESCO, 2023
	CHILDREN'S ECONOMIC CAPITAL	17 - Unemployment rate	Unemployment refers to the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment. Definitions of labor force and unemployment differ by country.	ILO, 2023
		18 - Poverty headcount ratio at $6.85 a day (2017 PPP$)	Poverty headcount ratio at $6.85 a day is the percentage of the population living on less than $6.85 a day at 2017 international prices.	World Bank, 2023
	VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN	19 - Children out of school	Children out of school are the percentage of primary-school-age children who are not enrolled in primary or secondary school. Children in the official primary age group that are in preprimary education should be considered out of school.	UNESCO, 2023
		20 - Adolescent fertility rate	Adolescent fertility rate is the number of births per 1,000 women ages 15-19.	UN Population Division, 2022
WOMEN'S SUB-INDEX	**WOMEN'S HEALTH**	21 - Lifetime risk of maternal mortality	Life time risk of maternal death is the probability that a 15-year-old female will die eventually from a maternal cause assuming that current levels of fertility and mortality (including maternal mortality) do not change in the future, taking into account competing causes of death.	WHO, 2020
		22 - Life expectancy at birth, female	Life expectancy at birth indicates the number of years a newborn infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life.	UN Population Division, 2022
	WOMEN'S EDUCATION	23 - Educational attainment (upper secondary), female	Percentage of population ages 25 and over that attained or completed upper secondary education.	UNESCO, 2023
		24 - Tertiary school enrolment (gross), female	Gross enrollment ratio is the ratio of total enrollment, regardless of age, to the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. Tertiary education, whether or not to an advanced research qualification, normally requires, as a minimum condition of admission, the successful completion of education at the secondary level.	UNESCO, 2023
	WOMEN'S ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	25 - Vulnerable employment, female	Vulnerable employment is contributing family workers and own-account workers as a percentage of total employment.	World Bank, ILO, 2022
		26 - Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate	Labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period. Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate is calculated by dividing female labor force participation rate by male labor force participation rate and multiplying by 100.	World Bank, ILO, 2023
	WOMEN'S DECISION-MAKING PARTICIPATION	27 - Women in ministerial level position	Women in ministerial level positions is the proportion of women in ministerial or equivalent positions (including deputy prime ministers) in the government. Prime Ministers/Heads of Government are included when they hold ministerial portfolios. Vice-Presidents and heads of governmental or public agencies are excluded.	Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2022
		28 - Women in senior and middle management positions	Female share of employment in managerial positions conveys the number of women in management as a percentage of employment in management. Employment in management is defined based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations.	ILO, 2023
	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	29 - Intimate partner violence, female	Share of women, aged 15 years and older, who experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in the past year.	IHME, 2023
		30 - Intentional homicide rate, female	Intentional homicides, female are estimates of unlawful female homicides purposely inflicted as a result of domestic disputes, interpersonal violence, violent conflicts over land resources, intergang violence over turf or control, and predatory violence and killing by armed groups. Intentional homicide does not include all intentional killing; the difference is usually in the organization of the killing.	UNODC, 2021

Annex 5
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ChildFund
Alliance

ChildFund Alliance is a global network of 11 child-focused development and humanitarian organizations reaching nearly 30 million children and family members in more than 70 countries. Members work to end violence and exploitation against children; provide expertise in emergencies and disasters to ease the harmful impact on children and their communities; and engage children, families and communities to create lasting change.

With more than 80 years of collective experience, our commitment, resources, innovation, and expertise serve as a powerful force to help children and families around the world transform their lives.

MISSION

We work in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting change, and the participation of children themselves is a key component of our approach. Our commitment, resources, innovation, knowledge and expertise serve as a powerful force to transform the lives of children. Annually, our investment in children is more than $500M USD.

ChildFund's **VISION** is for a world in which all children enjoy their rights and achieve their full potential. Our mission focuses on working together with children to create sustainable solutions that protect and advance their rights and well-being. The collective strength of our members helps us serve as a global voice with and for children, to highlight the issues children care about, and to mobilize effectively to address threats to their lives, safety and well-being.