

TOWARDS BETTER INVESTMENT IN THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: THE VIEWS OF CHILDREN

'It is impossible for them to invest in us if they do not ask us what to invest in! We know; they should ask'.

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Context

Since the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted 25 years ago states have made important progress in realizing children's rights. But more needs to be done to close the gap between the rights of children enshrined in the CRC and the reality for millions of children across the world. Realization of children's rights costs money. Children, who constitute more than 30% of the world's population, have the right to go to school, receive health care, benefit from social assistance, access a justice system and be protected from violence and abuse, among others. Resources are also needed to fulfil children's civil rights and freedoms, including children's right to participation and information.

The lack of sufficient, efficient and equitable investment in children in many countries is one of the biggest barriers to realizing children's rights. Many countries - rich and poor - fail to budget and spend adequately to realize children's rights.

In January 2014, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee) decided to develop a General Comment on Public Spending to Realize Children's Rights to provide further guidance to the States Parties to the CRC and other non-state actors on how to address this gap to realize the rights of all children in a sustainable way.

In 2014, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) decided to dedicate its annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child in March 2015 to the theme "Towards Better Investment in the Rights of the Child". The meeting includes a panel discussion with experts from the UN, Member States and civil society, which will be followed by the adoption of a resolution.

A Child Rights Connect Working Group on Investment in Children ⁽¹⁾ is supporting the

1 African Child Policy Forum, Child Rights Coalition Asia, Child Rights Connect, Defence for Children Costa Rica, Eurochild, International Baby Food Action Network,

development of the General Comment on Public Spending to Realize Children's Rights and it is also engaging in the Human Rights Council annual full-day meeting on "Towards Better Investment in the Rights of the Child". To ensure that children's views are heard and considered in these UN-processes, the Child Rights Connect Working Group asked a team of children's rights participation experts from the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast to assist in developing methods and research instruments so that children across the world could provide their views and recommendations on investment in children.

In total 2693 children, from 71 different countries, took part in this consultation, via the methods offered (face-to-face consultations, online and paper-based surveys).

Each country was categorised by region, according to the UN regional groups ⁽²⁾ and these regions are abbreviated in the report as follows. Below the regions are presented alongside the total number of participating countries in each region:

Region	Abbreviation	Total countries
Africa	Africa	18
Asia-Pacific	Asia-Pacific	16
Eastern Europe	EE	7
Latin America and Caribbean	LAC	16
Western Europe and Others	WEOG	14

Redlamyc, Plan International, Save the Children and UNICEF

[2http://www.un.org/depts/DGACM/RegionalGroups.shtml](http://www.un.org/depts/DGACM/RegionalGroups.shtml)



Image 1: Child participants in Latin America and Caribbean

Conducting a global consultation with children on public expenditure

The research team, in collaboration with the Child Rights Connect Working Group on Investment in Children, developed methods and research instruments to facilitate children's engagement in the above mentioned UN processes through online and face-to-face consultations conducted with children globally.

Methodology and methods

The Centre for Children's Rights adopts a children's rights-based approach to all research that engages children and young people as participants.¹ A core aspect of this approach is the involvement of a children's or a young persons' advisory group (CRAG/YPAG).

For this consultation, the research team worked with a YPAG (seven children, aged 13-17; one male, 6 female) and a CRAG (5 children, aged 5-6; 2 male, 3 female) in Northern Ireland.

The YPAG assisted the research team to identify the key issues that would be included in the online survey, advised on refining the face-to-face consultation tools and gave feedback on the draft survey before it was released online. Once the data were collected and analysed, the YPAG worked with the research team to develop a child-friendly version of the report.



Image 2: YPAG members

The CRAG assisted the research team by providing input into the development of a consultation tool for facilitators to use with younger children or those with literacy difficulties.



Image 3: CRAG trying out one of the methods for younger children

Face-to-face consultation tools

A pilot version of the face-to-face consultation guide was developed in order to avail of opportunities presented at regional and national events being held between July and October 2014. This was refined for wider distribution and used with children aged 10-18 at the end of 2014, incorporating feedback from children and facilitators at these events and the guidance of the YPAG. A separate consultation guide was developed for younger children (aged 4-10) or those with literacy difficulties.

Consultations were led by regional and national child rights organizations using

the methods and facilitators' packs developed by the research team. These were translated and adapted for use in the different contexts. Facilitators were provided with a structured feedback form to complete and return to the research team. Reports were received from 50 countries on consultations that involved 1041 children.

Online consultation tools

In order to ensure that as many children as possible could participate in the consultation, a survey with online and paper-based options was developed. This was aimed at children aged 10-18 years and sought to engage the views of children regardless of their access to experienced facilitators or group-based discussions. This survey was available in English, French and Spanish on the Child Rights Connect website (see Image 4). It was also translated for use in paper-based surveys in Asia-Pacific and Western Europe. There were 1153 valid responses from 41 countries (including 20 countries who also participated in face-to-face consultations). Additionally, the survey was translated into Finnish and administered in paper format to 499 children. This data is represented in this report, but using the open ended responses only (due to late submission of information).

The survey was not randomly or representatively sampled across each of the countries globally and it is therefore not possible to make generalisations to all children. Throughout the report significant findings are reported, highlighting the effects of region and gender on participants' responses to the survey. However, it is important to note that often the effect sizes (which indicate the extent to which the results may be considered to have practical as well as statistical significance) were small. The survey findings should therefore be interpreted within the context of these limitations. The survey succeeded in providing an opportunity for a larger number of children to share their views in this consultation.

Your Views on How Governments Spend Money

Hello, thank you for visiting this survey.

In this survey, we are asking **for the views of children from all around the world**. The topic we are focussing on is **how governments spend public money for children**. When we say public money, we mean the money that the government uses to provide for all children and adults.



As you know, all governments have money and they must decide how and where to spend it.



We want to know your views on **how governments spend public money for children**, and the ways in which they decide how much is spent and on what.

There are no right or wrong answers. **We just want to know what you think.**

Image4: Screen shot of the first page of the survey

Participants

Children involved in this consultation were aged from 4 to 19 and included those who had experience of participating in public expenditure decision-making as well as those who did not; children who had been displaced from their homes by natural disasters and by conflict; children with disabilities; children who attended regional and global meetings aimed at children and adolescents' participation; children in and out of school; and children of minority ethnic groups. Their views therefore represent varied and diverse backgrounds in terms of age, gender, ability, region, country, language and socioeconomic background.

Analysis

Facilitators' reports and survey responses were collected and analyzed by the research team who then wrote the final report with support from the Child Rights Connect Working Group on Investment in Children.

NB Throughout the report, children's oral or written views from the face-to-face consultations and survey are presented in *grey italics*. These include both direct quotations from individual children and statements highlighting the main concerns and suggestions of groups of children in the face to face consultations.

Overview

The children's views are summarized according to the following questions:

1. Why should governments invest in the realization of children's rights?
2. How much should governments invest to realize children's rights?
3. What should governments invest in to realize children's rights?
4. Whom should governments invest in to realize children's rights?
5. How can governments make good decisions about public expenditure to realize children's rights?
6. Why and how should governments involve children in decisions about public expenditure?
7. What should the UN do to improve investment in children?

Summary of Key Findings

This consultation, involving 2693 children from 71 different countries, demonstrates that children have clear views about how governments should spend money in ways that will realize children's rights and that they are able and willing to share these views. While their views on where governments need to invest may vary by context, their common messages are summarized as follows:

Why invest in children

- ◆ Children are entitled to benefit from investment.
- ◆ Investing in children's rights is an investment in all of society, now and in the future.
- ◆ Without investment to ensure that all children have an adequate standard of living, children cannot enjoy their other rights.

Where to invest

- ◆ All children should be included in public expenditure, especially children who are living in vulnerable conditions.
- ◆ Investment needs to reflect and meet the requirements of children in the communities and localities in which they live.
- ◆ Investing in families enables investment in children.

How to make good decisions about investment

- ◆ Governments should provide information about how they are spending money for children, including in ways that are accessible to children.
- ◆ Governments should plan well and not waste or misuse public resources.
- ◆ Decisions about public expenditure should be made wisely to protect the rights of children now and in the future.

Why and how to involve children

- ◆ Children want to be included in decision-making about government expenditure, and they consider that their insight will help governments to make better decisions about investment.
- ◆ Children need support from respectful adults who will help them to understand public spending processes and to express their views.
- ◆ Governments should work hard to ensure that children's views are taken into account in decision-making processes.

Consultation Findings

Allocating resources for children should not be regarded as expenditure but rather an investment. (LAC)

1. Why should governments invest in the realization of children's rights?

Children across the consultations offered a number of reasons as to why governments should invest in children in order to realize their rights. First, there was a strong sense that children are entitled to investment in order to fulfil their potential.

Public money should be invested to offer children a decent life. (EE)

Secondly, many children argued that politicians should be working for the good of all people in the country and, within that, children were entitled to be treated fairly as citizens:

The budget should not say that because children are not able to vote, they (government officials) will put the concern of only the adults (in it). Because they are in the government for all and must listen to our views. (Africa)

Children observed that investment in children made good economic sense, not just for children but for the country as a whole.

Investing in children is a long-term investment, and it brings a lot, so remember to think of it. (Asia-Pacific)

Some children expressed views that indicated that there was a relationship

between expenditure that was beneficial for children and things that would help the economy or public more generally. Sometimes this was connected to the negative consequences of a lack of investment, such as lack of education reducing employment opportunities and children turning to drugs and crime.

More money should be spent on youth homelessness and support for low income families. Youth recreation programs funded by the government could help youth avoid crime. (WEOG)

Often, however, children suggested that investment in areas prioritized by children such as technology (including internet access), play spaces and roads would promote a more general public good.

Public spaces to attract more tourism, improve the economy. With a better economy, we could invest more in the future. (LAC)

Children's agreement about the need for investment in children for the realization of their rights is in contrast to the views of many children about the extent to which government is in fact considering them specifically when making decisions on public expenditure.

Children who completed the survey were asked if they agreed that their government thinks about children when making expenditure decisions. When asked on a 4 point Likert scale (ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 4 strongly agree, with an additional option of 'I don't know') how

much they agreed with the statement ‘my government thinks about children when deciding how to spend money’, the overall mean response across the sample was verging on positiveⁱⁱ. However, when assessing the spread of responses (see Figure 1), it is clear that only one third of the children (34%) either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

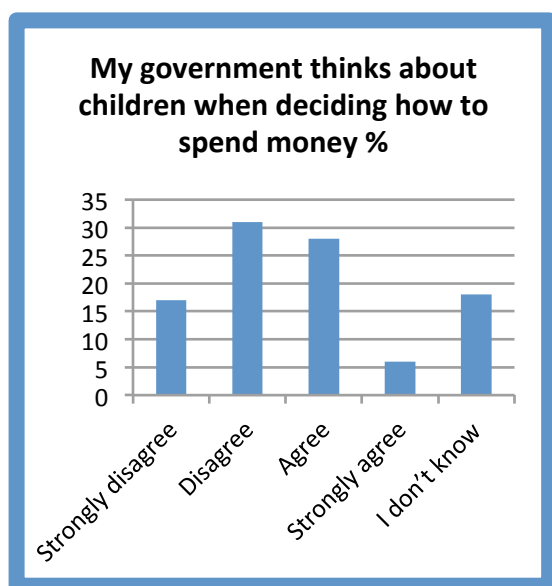


Figure 1: Children’s views on government’s consideration of them in decision making

Further analysisⁱⁱⁱ revealed that there were no significant differences in responses in terms of gender^{iv}. However, statistically significant differences were found between regions,^v with children in Asia-Pacific being most positive in their views about whether their governments consider them when spending money. Table 1 demonstrates the proportion of children that agreed or strongly agreed (in a combined response) to this statement, highlighting that a greater proportion of children in Africa and Asia-Pacific agreed that their governments think about children when making expenditure decisions.

Table 1: Children’s views on government’s consideration of them – by region

	(Strongly) disagree	(Strongly) Agree	Don’t know
Africa	48%	42%	10%
Asia-Pacific	37%	40%	23%
EE	51%	25%	24%
LAC	69%	22%	9%
WEOG	49%	38%	13%

2 How much should governments invest to realize children’s rights?

It is necessary to raise enough money to meet the needs of children. (WEOG)

Before discussing money matters, concerned officials should understand the problems and issues first, making sure there will be adequate funding for all children’s needs. (Asia-Pacific)

Although participants were not asked specifically about the amount of money that government needed to invest, many children took the opportunity to advise the Minister for Finance that their main message would be to ensure governments allocate *sufficient* resources to deliver on rights.

One group specifically recommended that government should comply with a requirement to invest 6% of GDP in education (LAC). Another group in a country experiencing austerity measures suggested that children should claim their rights by creating a ‘*new movement that could ask in a single voice, “It was good for us, why did you end it?”*’ (WEOG) Many children also emphasized that decisions on how much to allocate to children should be based on good information and research.

Spend money on research to find out at the ground levels where the money is needed most in the regions that the right amount of money can be spent where it is needed most. (Africa)

There should be enough budget to provide for all the rights of children. (Asia-Pacific)



Image 5: A child in Africa completing the survey

3. What should governments invest in to realize children's rights?

Children's views indicated an awareness of the fact that the implementation of all of rights requires an allocation of resources. Moreover, children consistently recognised the inter-relationship of many rights and the fact that a lack of investment in one could affect the enjoyment of others and vice versa.

If you have good health, basic needs and integrity, you can go to school. (EE)

If you are not part of the National System of Identity, you do not have access to basic services, to live with dignity, to get a decent job. (LAC)

The survey offered children some specific examples of children's rights and asked respondents to select all of those rights on which they believed governments were not spending enough. The results reveal that on average children selected 5 rights (children in LAC selected the most rights, on average they selected 7). Figure 2 demonstrates how frequently each right was selected. It is notable that all of these rights were identified by large numbers of children. The three most frequently selected rights were: support for families, right to have views taken seriously, and the right to play in a safe place. While many children chose socio-economic rights, such as, education and health amongst their priorities, it is interesting that the second most common selection was the right to 'have views taken seriously'. Other civil and political rights such as access to information and the right to privacy were also chosen by many children, indicating a perceived need among children for more investment in these rights.

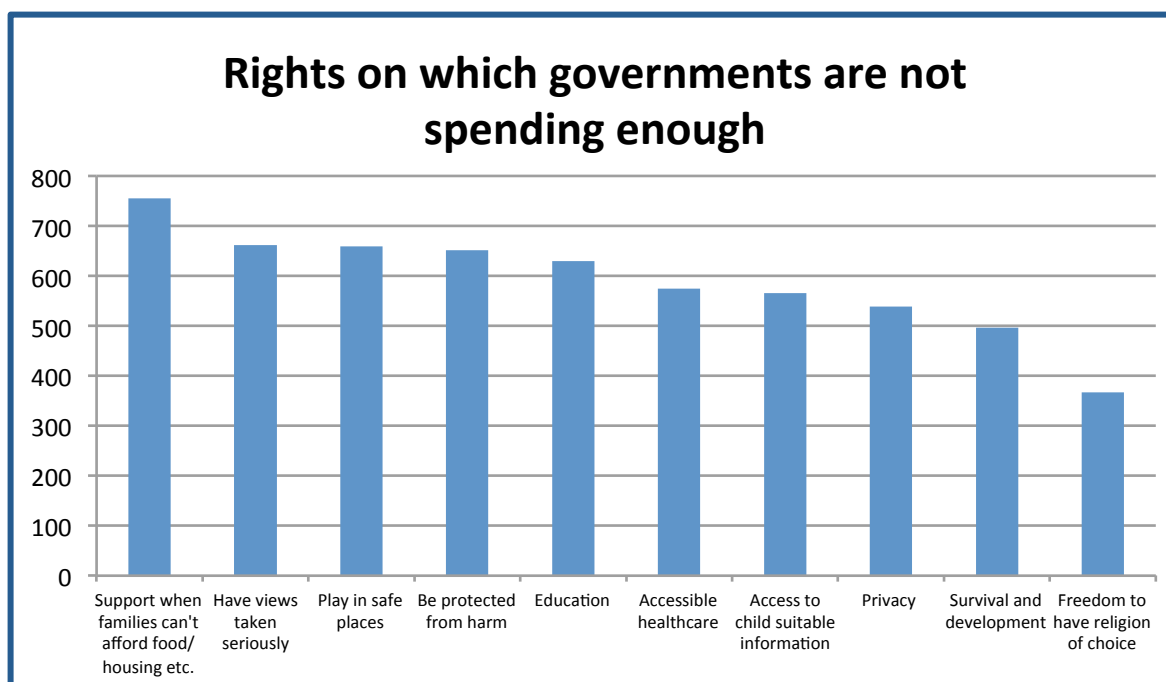


Figure 2: Where governments are not spending enough – Frequency of selections, in order from most to least selected

Further analysis revealed some significant differences across gender: a greater proportion of boys selected the ‘right to have views taken seriously’ and ‘accessible healthcare’ compared to girls.^{vi} Furthermore, with regard to regional differences, there were consistent differences in selections across all rights. More children in Latin America and Caribbean selected each of the rights,

except for ‘freedom to have religion of choice’ and ‘support for families’, which were selected most often by children in Africa^{vii}. These findings highlight different priorities for children in different parts of the world. See Table 2 for a breakdown of priorities for each region. Although differences appear, it is also important to note the commonalities, particularly around an adequate standard of living.

Table 2: Rights NOT receiving enough spend – by region

Region	Most frequent selection	Second	Third
Africa	Support for families who cannot afford food/housing etc.	Access to child suitable information	Have views taken seriously
Asia-Pacific	Play in safe places	Support for families who cannot afford food/housing etc.	Have views taken seriously
EE	Support for families who cannot afford food/housing etc.	Accessible healthcare	Education
LAC	Protection from harm	Education	Play in safe places
WEOG	Support for families who cannot afford food/housing etc.	Protection from harm	Have views taken seriously

In the face-to-face consultations, children were asked a similar but differently worded question - 'What do you think governments should spend money on in order to support children's rights?' In order to prioritize areas of public expenditure, children were provided with examples of standard areas of allocation, which resonated with those offered in the survey (although, considering the methodology, offered more scope for further discussion) such as: education; transportation; health; defence; water and sanitation; social security. They were then asked to identify their priorities for spending. Their reasons for choosing specific areas are explored below. What children think is required to support their participation (i.e. have their views taken seriously) in relation to public expenditure is explored more fully in section 6.

It is worth noting that the issues discussed below include rights that were not offered in the set list of areas in the face-to-face consultations. For example, access to justice was a common additional area of concern for many children. Moreover, some groups prioritized rights that were not identified by any other group. For example, one group had as its second priority the environment, air quality and pollution (Asia-Pacific). Moreover, some areas generated debate among children. These included expenditure on the right to defence and the right to freedom of religion. In terms of the latter, while a few felt that this was a right that was not a priority for expenditure, in other contexts, children suggested that governments needed to invest more to ensure freedom of conscience and to encourage religious tolerance (e.g. Africa).

The need for investment in infrastructure was raised across the consultations as being important for children to be able to access and enjoy their rights in a number of these areas. Most commonly, children identified the needs for good roads so that they could get safely and promptly to schools and hospitals. However, electricity, technology (in particular internet access), sanitation and clean

water were all also considered to be important areas of investment to ensure children's rights.

The government should provide electricity to all remote areas for children of all backgrounds. (Africa)

Survival and safety

When one is killed, one cannot enjoy the other rights, therefore government must ensure that children are protected. (Africa)

In the survey, survival and development was selected by 44% of the children as a right on which their government is not spending enough money. Protection from harm was more frequently selected - chosen by 57% of children. In the face-to-face consultation data, issues of survival and protection from child abuse were a significant priority in many contexts, with children giving specific examples of threats to rights that required resources to be addressed. These included: 'baby-dumping'; child-killings; rape and kidnapping. Children who identified safety as an issue frequently identified the need for resources to be spent on services that could assist children. For example, one group of children prioritized spending on 'child protection systems, Child Helplines, Social Assistance Departments and the Police' (EE). Infrastructure was also often linked to issues of survival and safety, particularly in areas affected by conflict or natural disaster. It included the need for spending on public lighting, safe streets and good roads so children can travel to school without being killed or injured.

It is necessary to prevent children from risk of violence and sexual abuse so government has to put in place mechanisms for child protection and make sure there is safety in public places and homes for children. (Africa)

Parents trained on how to treat children well. (LAC)

Education

Please invest in our school heating system. Our parents have to pay for that. (EE)

Many girl children drop out of school because of lack of toilets and running water facilities in toilets in schools. Every school should have adequate number of toilets with running water. (Asia-Pacific)

Education was frequently considered to be an important area of expenditure for children's rights. Amongst the range of rights offered in the survey, 56% of children chose this as a right that their government is not spending enough on. A range of explanations were offered in the face-to-face consultations, which explained the importance of funding to those involved. For example, many children highlighted the low levels of teachers' salaries, noting that lack of funding led to teachers being 'demotivated'.

A common concern was that many aspects of education that should be free were not free, including a range of

Children's recommendations for education:

- Each school should have a library (LAC)
- Children's rights education (WEOG)
- Free school buses (Asia-Pacific)
- Teachers trained for minority languages (LAC)
- Protection from corporal punishment (Asia-Pacific)
- Classrooms where the windows don't let in leaks when it rains (Africa)

essentials, such as books, uniforms, and transport. There was also a case made about the need for investment in the safety and hygiene of school premises as well as the provision of basic facilities. Investment in education was commonly perceived to have advantages for other rights, including the fact that it was needed to ensure that the adults who help children are trained to do their jobs properly.

People will not be able to do their jobs without learning. (WEOG)

Health

If I am sick or get serious diseases, I can't do anything. I won't be able to go to school or play. (Africa)

Health support for a child should begin when the child is in the mother's womb ... only when the child is given nutritious food he or she will be able to grow into his or her full potential (Asia-Pacific)

In the face-to-face consultation, accessible healthcare was frequently chosen as the first or second priority for investment. When it was presented within a list of rights in the survey, 51% of children selected this as being a right on which their government is not spending enough. Further exploration of the face-to-face data highlights that many children prioritized investment in good quality health care for children, access to medicine ('not just painkillers' (Africa)) and the training of staff. Some children argued for special attention to the very young and others linked the right to health to access to good nutrition and clean water. Children warned that, in the absence of good services, some parents would rely on traditional healers or medicines or many children would go without care with particular impacts on children with disabilities and street children.

As a baby can you be educated to understand at that tender age the right

to education? Child health rather is a basic requirement. (Africa)

Children specifically mentioned the interconnection between health and education.

Every school should have access to a medical facility for fast and easy access to health care through the educational system. (EE)

Children's recommendations for health:

- Free medicine in hospitals (Asia-Pacific)
- Mobile clinics in deep villages (Africa)
- Specialised hospitals for children and adolescents (EE)
- Stopping ill-treatment in children's hospitals (Africa)
- Special attention for mental health care/ psychological support (EE)
- Sanitation and control of waste (LAC)
- Research for cures for diseases affecting children (EE)
- Specialised hospitals for children and adolescents (LAC)
- First aid kits, sanitary pads in schools (Africa)
- Drug rehabilitation programs (LAC)

Adequate standard of living

If children don't have realized the right to support when families cannot afford food, clothing or housing, they cannot have accessible healthcare and all of the other rights. (EE)

We need a decent house to live. Provide funds for people who do not have any house and living inside slums or living on pavements. (Asia-Pacific)

Across the consultations, there was significant attention given to the need to provide children with an adequate standard of living. Support for families when they cannot afford clothing/ housing was the most frequently selected right in the survey amongst the list of rights that children felt their government were not spending enough on (selected by 67%) and it was a common priority for extra expenditure across the regions, except for Latin America and Caribbean (see Table 2). Regional examples were also evident in the face-to-face consultations, with a noted concern among children in Asia-Pacific and Africa regarding children having access to sufficient and adequate food.

We most of the time eat maize and the plate is very small to the extent that it can't make full even a young child of 3 years. There is a need to improve not only the quantity side but the quality. (Africa)

Every child should be able to eat good food not always rice porridge; but food that can satisfy them; once in a while they want to be able to savor food that is fancy. (Asia-Pacific)

There was also recognition that, when there are discrepancies in standards of living, children's life chances are not the same and that government could use investment to redress this imbalance, particularly for children who are deprived.

It is common that there are richer and poorer areas, but it shouldn't affect the child as much as it does today. (EE)

Children considered that the failure to spend resources to ensure that children had adequate food and shelter was a threat to other rights. One group suggested:

Placing measures for poorer children at the centre and at the beginning of any attempt. (WEOG)

Children also saw the benefit of social assistance payments for families with children. Within this, some stressed the importance of supporting children who were looked after by their grandparents or other children in child-headed households. Some cautioned that the state needed to be proactive in ensuring that social assistance payments were actually spent for the benefit of children.

Not every family assures that the money in fact reaches to the children. (WEOG)

Access to justice

Stop people from being frightened. If they've actually done something wrong like hurt someone, make the police do more about it. (WEOG)

Together with other elements characterizing an 'enabling environment for child rights' (participation, privacy, access to information), access to justice was identified as an important area for investment in the face-to-face consultations. In several contexts, a number of issues related to expenditure on justice systems were considered to be a major priority for expenditure for children. For some, the focus was on ensuring that those who caused harm to children were prosecuted, a position that reflected children's views in a number of national contexts that many offenders are not prosecuted. For example, children in the Latin America and Caribbean region placed high priority on access to justice. They argued that there was a lot of violence, drug trafficking and deaths in their countries and not enough being done to protect children and prosecute offenders.

There is no real punishment for those who break and violate rights. (LAC)

It is important to note that although access to justice was not included in the list of options for survey respondents, the highest rated right for children in Latin America and Caribbean (in response to areas where there is not enough expenditure – see Table 2) was 'protection from harm'. Although not related directly to access to justice, the concerns around violence and justice align with children's priorities around protection. Other regions suggested a need for legal aid and training for sensitive policing, particularly for girls who have been raped. Equally, there was perceived to be a need for child-friendly justice systems for young people who have offended.

If children are in conflict with the law, they are still children and need special attention. (Africa)

Play and leisure, culture and the arts

There should be security in parks so that we can feel confident and not afraid that we are going to be robbed or attacked by gangs or human trafficking. (LAC)

Access to play and leisure was also raised as a priority area for investment in the majority of the consultations. In the survey having somewhere safe to play was amongst the highest selected priorities for investment (58%), and the highest priority for children in Asia-Pacific (see Table 2). A desire to see more investment in this area was a common issue for children across various regions and personal circumstances, with a minority saying that it was not as important as other areas such as health and protection.

For many children, the issue was access to any form of play and leisure and for others a desire to ensure that play spaces were safe. Some children raised the fact

that access to play and leisure was expensive and called on the government to do more in this respect.

Since the government doesn't have many parks for children, they can step in to regulate the price of the privately owned ones. (Africa)

Similar issues were raised in relation to access to arts and culture, with some children saying that these issues were not supported at all and others pointing out that this is only available to children if their parents can pay for activities privately.

Poor children as well as those who have more financial resources should have the opportunity to develop singing, piano, swimming and sports. (LAC)

By increasing costs for spots at the music and culture school, we are worried that the offer is not available for everyone interested. (WEOG).



Image 6: Child participants in Asia-Pacific

4. Whom should governments invest in to realize children's rights?

All children, not just a few or selected groups, should equally benefit from

programs, projects or services. (Asia-Pacific)

I hate my school as only boys are given the opportunity to play. (Africa)

Children expressed the view that public expenditure should be to the benefit of all children. However, when asked how much they agreed (again on a 4 point Likert scale) that money is spent in a way that allows all children to enjoy their rights, responses were not very positive. ^{viii} Figure 3 demonstrates the spread of responses across this question, indicating that only 28% of children agreed or strongly agreed that money is spent in a way that allows ALL children to enjoy their rights.

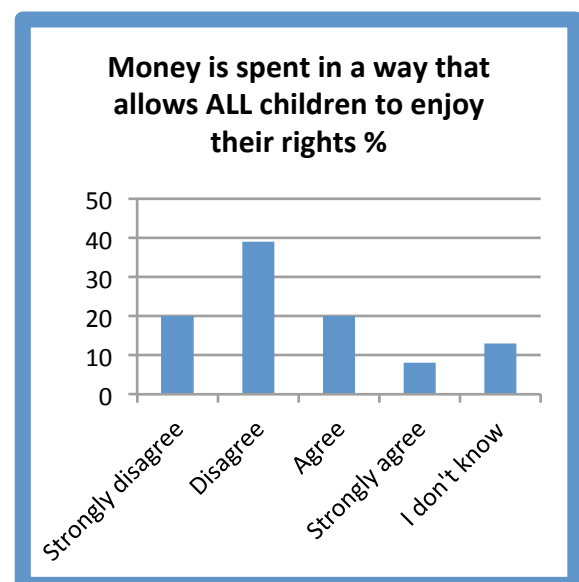


Figure 3: Children's views on equal expenditure

Further analysis ^{ix} reveals statistically significant gender differences: boys believe more strongly that money is spent equally. ^x Additionally, (statistically significant) regional differences also emerged. ^{xi} Children in Asia-Pacific agreed most strongly that money is spent equally in their country (as is evident in Table 3 below).

Table 3: Children’s views on equal expenditure – by region

	(Strongly) disagree	(Strongly) Agree	Don’t know
Africa	73%	23%	4%
Asia-Pacific	44%	35%	21%
EE	60%	23%	17%
LAC	77%	18%	5%
WEOG	63%	30%	7%

Across the consultations, a core theme was that governments should spend money in a fair way, meaning one that did not unjustly exclude. However, many children identified areas of discrimination, particularly in relation to disability, gender and race.

If you are black, if you are a pregnant girl or if you speak another language or have a disability, you are discriminated against in school. You are not accepted; you cannot register. (LAC)

Children recognised that spending priorities might differ over a child’s life course. For example, children in Asia-Pacific observed that health care was needed during pregnancy to ensure that children were born healthy. Others pointed out that adolescents and teenagers have different needs for expenditure and that these were often neglected.

Children living in different areas of the country

More funds should be allocated in the national budget to cover children in the very remote areas of the country so that they can equally enjoy their rights as those in the cities. (Africa)

Many children had a sense that expenditure was not distributed equitably in their country and this was often linked to the area in which children lived, with rural children, for example, often thought to be missing out.

The central governments should allocate more resources to every distant region in the country, because children with disabilities do not have access to hospitals. (LAC)

Children who are perceived to need additional resources

Children were asked to identify particular groups of children in their communities who may not enjoy their rights equally because of a lack of resources to address their specific circumstances. What is clear from this is that children have a strong sense of those children who are most vulnerable to breaches of their rights in their communities and that this varies across and within countries. Bearing that in mind, amongst all the participants there were certain groups of children mentioned consistently as requiring additional resources and included children with disabilities and those without homes. Many additional groups were also identified, and some were consistently mentioned across a number of regions.

In the survey, children were asked to select as many priority groups as they felt necessary according to their context. On average, children selected 6 different priority groups (children in LAC selected the most: on average they selected 8). The most frequently highlighted groups were those living with very little money, those who were homeless and those with a disability.

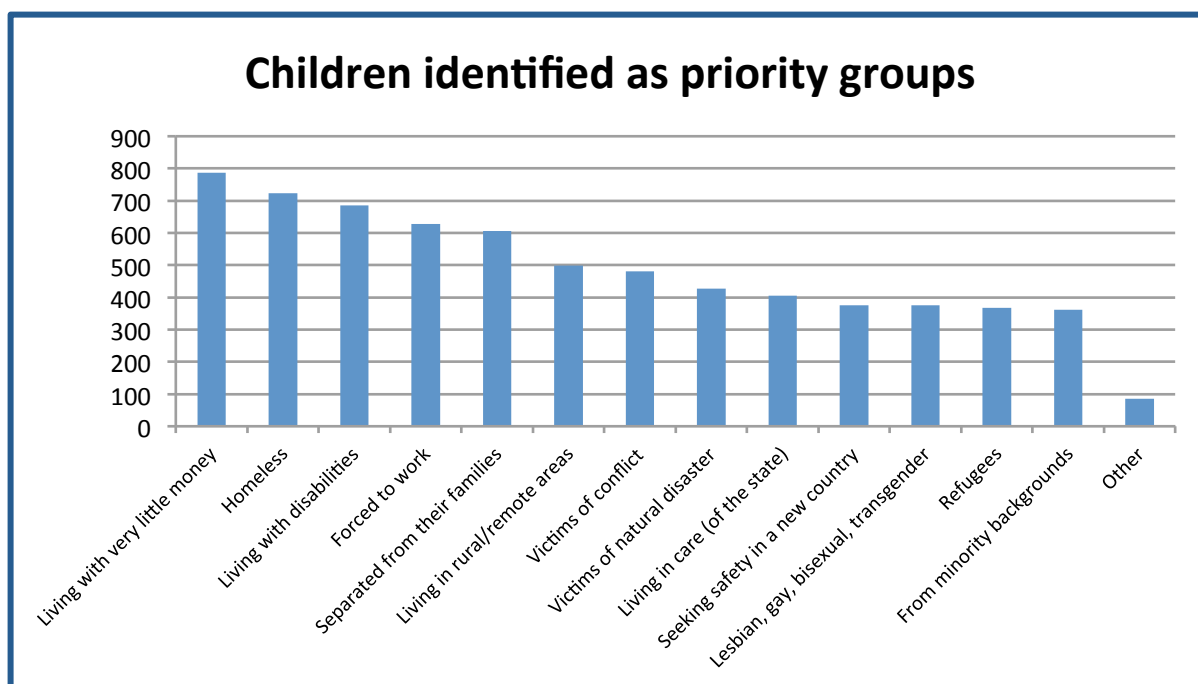


Figure 4: Priority groups: Frequency of selections, in order from most to least selected

Table 4: Priority groups – by region

Region	Most frequent selection	Second	Third
Africa	Children who are homeless	Children living in rural/remote areas	Children who are separated from their families
Asia-Pacific	Children with very little money	Children who are homeless	Children with disabilities
EE	Children with very little money	Children who are homeless	Children with disabilities
LAC	Children who are forced to work	Children with disabilities	Children with very little money
WEOG	Children who are homeless	Children with very little money	Children with disabilities

Further analysis was conducted to explore associations between gender/ region and the selection of priority groups. The main differences emerged across regions, with statistically significant associations revealed across each question. Each priority group was selected most frequently by children from Latin America and Caribbean, except for children who are victims of natural disasters (selected most frequently by children in EE), refugee

and homeless children (selected most frequently by children from WEOG).^{xii} Across each region, the top ranking priorities all relate to issues of poverty, i.e., homelessness, forced to work and living with little money, see Table 4.

Some of the reasons that children gave for identifying particular groups are given below.

Children with disabilities: *there should be equity between children with and without disability (Asia-Pacific)*

Children living on the street (homeless): *There are no financial resources for them, they are prone to infections, their quality of life is very low. (LAC)*

Child-headed households: *Many orphaned children are forced to look after their young siblings; for a variety of reasons but mainly because they do not want to split up. (Africa)*

Children in state care: *Society marginalises them and they often live in conditions that are not adequate for their development and blossoming. (WEOG)*

Cross-cutting theme:

Spending on families can enable investment in children

Investing in parents so that they do not separate and take care of us. (LAC)

If the parents have jobs with adequate wages then they will provide everything for their children. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure jobs for parents. (Asia-Pacific)

There was a significant and cross-cutting theme in the children's responses that acknowledged that public expenditure on families can be an important investment in children. As reported in section 3, 67% of children highlighted 'support for families who cannot afford food/ housing etc.' as a right requiring more expenditure in their country.

Most often children expressed views about the importance of the government investing in ways that ensured that their parents could get employment locally, for

example through training programs or helping them to start their own businesses and earn enough to take care of them.

They should raise the salaries, the minimum wage and not only the prices. (LAC)

It is important that governments invest in training parents and youths that enable them to obtain decent and sustainable jobs. (LAC)



Image 7: Children's responses in Eastern Europe

5. How can governments make good decisions about public expenditure to realize children's rights?

In both the face-to-face consultations and the survey, children were asked to think about the processes of decision-making for governments on public expenditure before giving their own views about what is important to them [various techniques were employed to assist them to think through the issues].

In the survey, children were asked (in an open ended response question) what governments could do to help children

have more confidence in them. A range of suggestions were offered. For example, many children focussed on participation, asking governments to listen to their views and to ensure children have the information required in an accessible format.

The government should talk to the children more. (WEOG)

Honesty and fairness were also recognised, as was children’s insistence that governments keep the promises that they make to children

Spend money fairly and wisely (Africa)

Keep your promises. (LAC)

In addition to this question around confidence, the survey also asked the children to select (from a choice of 10) the 3 most important issues for governments when they are making wise and fair decision. The top 3 selections were: don’t waste money, keep the promises that you make and tell us what you are spending on (see Figure 5). Further analysis revealed statistically significant associations between gender and selection of two of the rights, with a greater proportion of boys selecting ‘don’t waste money’ and a greater proportion of girls selecting ‘make sure money is spent fairly for all groups’^{xii}

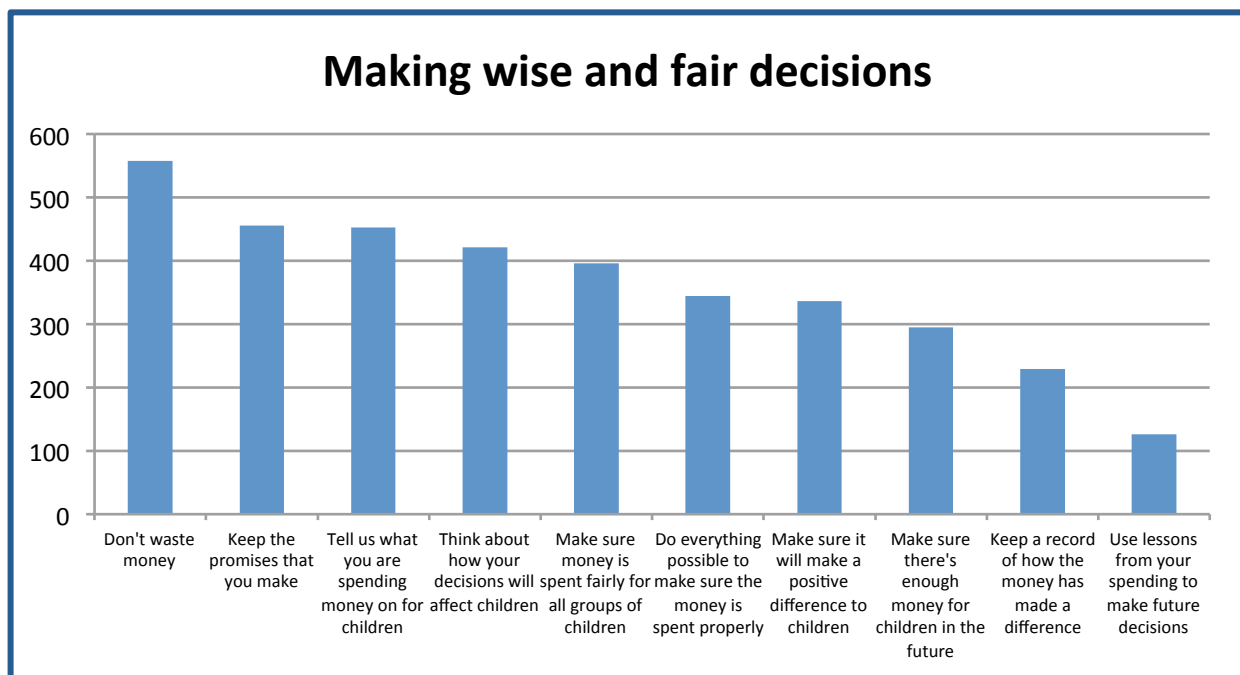


Figure 5: How can governments make wise and fair decisions: Frequency of selections, in order from most to least selected

Additionally, regional variations are also evident. Children across all regions were as likely (as each other) to select ‘don’t waste money’ and ‘use lessons from your spending to make future decisions’. However, statistical differences in terms of likeliness to choose the other options emerged. On this occasion there was no

pattern across the regions in terms of any one region dominating any particular selection^{xiv}. Children across all regions selected ‘Don’t waste money’ as one of the 3 most important issues for governments when they are making wise and fair decisions (see Table 5).

Table 5: Making wise and fair decisions – by region

Region	Most frequent selection	Second	Third
Africa	Make sure money is spent fairly for all groups of children	Don't waste money	Ensure it will make a positive difference for children
Asia-Pacific	Don't waste money	Do everything possible to make sure money is spent properly	Tell us what you are spending on children
EE	Keep your promises	Don't waste money	Think about how decisions will affect children
LAC	Don't waste money	Tell us what you are spending on children	Keep your promises
WEOG	Don't waste money	Think about how decisions will affect children	Make sure money is spent fairly for all groups of children

Children's views in the face-to-face consultations on the key things that they wanted governments to focus on when planning and administering public money are summarised below. These themes align to the core issues emerging from the survey data around spending money efficiently, effectively and fairly, with children's needs and rights at the forefront of expenditure decisions.

N.B one of the most common suggestions in this context was that decision-making should be **participatory**. Given its significance and value to children, it is explored in depth in full in section 6.

Informed

Gather information on the real needs of boys and girls... in order to get a real diagnosis. (LAC)

A common theme that emerged across the children's consultations was their view that any decisions about public expenditure should be based on good information sources defined by one group as 'research and knowing what the issues are' (Africa). Several groups spoke about the need for a

good 'diagnosis' of the problem and stressed that this should be undertaken across localities, looking at differences by gender and other groups and should involve speaking to children and their parents, including, for example, through peer research. A recurring reason was that this would ensure that government did not spend money on things that they did not need: government should avoid unnecessary duplication.

Not only keep records but also update them constantly because this will help them to determine if they are making progress or not. (Africa)

Responsive

The greater the influence and the more flexibility that a local government enjoys, the greater the influence that children can have. (EE)

Resources don't reach the regions, the investment in children should be decentralised. (LAC)

Children in a number of contexts suggested that it was important for governments to spend money where it was needed most. Often this was linked to the need to ensure that local communities had control over expenditure so that it could be allocated to the needs of those communities. Other children argued that the governments should have contingency plans so that they can respond effectively to emergencies and disasters.

Resources should be allocated or reserved in cases of emergencies. (LAC)

Transparent

Keep a record of every cent we use and the public must have access to that information. (Africa)

Children agreed strongly that governments should be able to demonstrate ('show') where public money is spent and what the results of this spending have been so 'that we know how well government spends money on us' (Africa). One group called for the enactment of a Freedom of Information law (LAC). With a view to this, children felt that information should be presented in an accessible format that would be understandable to them.

The government and the school committee should give us reports and budget allocation manuals, so that we will be able to know how much was allocated; how much resource allocated was used and what remained. (Africa)

A lot of people may not be interested but the information has to be there, and whoever is interested should have it available. (LAC)

Additionally, when asked to provide their advice to the Minister for Finance, children

often referred to issues around transparency, for example:

The minister could have a questions and answers hour on TV every week or every month, and they could answer questions posed by teenagers and inform people about matters. (WEOG)

Free from corruption

Public money is looted since the public accountability is not given importance. People think that politicians cannot be questioned when they spend public money. (Asia-Pacific)

Children in a significant number of countries raised a strong concern about corruption by government officials and politicians, which they believed limited the capacity of government to realize children's rights. One of the role play scenarios for younger children involved biased spending and these children's reaction was 'That's not fair! 'Because all should be shared equally.' (WEOG).

My suggestions to the Minister of Finance is that they shouldn't use the common fund to enrich their families but use it to provide the needs of the district to promote development. (Africa)

Manage public funds properly. Do not steal and never use them for personal interests (Asia-Pacific)

Effective

Good planning so unspent money does not have to be returned. (Africa)

Don't waste our money on something that is useless....BE EFFICIENT! SAVE MONEY! (Asia-Pacific)

Many children believed that their government was failing to make efficient and effective use of money. Children voiced a variety of concerns that included perceptions of money being wasted, or spent on things that were not the most effective for children or not spent at all. Children also recommended that governments should include children's views in their assessment of the impact of public expenditure.

Additionally, children taking part in the survey, when asked what their advice to the Minister for Finance would be, often discussed issues of efficient and effective spend, for example:

Don't waste money on things that don't help children. (WEOG)

Avoid unnecessary duplication. (Asia-Pacific)

Accountable

Government should monitor the implementation of programs, projects and services for children and check if children are truly receiving the benefits. (Asia-Pacific)

Stronger communication between those who make the decisions and those who 'get' the consequences of those decisions. (EE)

Children in a number of contexts emphasized the need to know that the money is used in the correct way. They suggested that there should be good systems for monitoring how money is spent and that these should involve children. One group suggested that this should include visits to 'poverty stricken areas to check if funds are equally distributed' (LAC). Others considered that government should set deadlines and have regular contact to update them on their progress.

Children's recommendations for accountability

- A Committee specifically assigned to handle money allocated to the needs of children (Africa)
- Children's rights inspectors to investigate the situation of children and come up with solutions to the dilemma they face (Africa)
- Create Control Commissions (LAC)
- Community committees to monitor local funds (LAC)
- Dedicated point persons who will ensure children's rights are protected (Asia-Pacific)
- Radio and TV should announce updates like they do with the stock exchange (Africa)

The expenditure of public resources in these two sectors (education and health) are not properly monitored and the quality of expenditure is not ensured. (Asia-Pacific)

A system must be established to closely monitor the actions of all leaders. (Africa)

Sustainable

If the government invests well, we will not run out of money in the future. (LAC)

If children are the future are you leaving them enough money to have a future? (WEOG)

When making suggestions and recommendations for government ministers, children emphasised that public money should be spent wisely on things that would benefit children now and in the future. This included, for example, schools and health facilities that were well built so that they would offer sustainable improvements in children's experience of their rights. There was also a common view that children and communities should be given the skills to be self-supporting.

Children can become self-sufficient if they are taught to be entrepreneurial from an early age. (Africa)

Children had a strong commitment to ensuring that resources were managed well to ensure the rights of future children, with some pointing out that 'the children of the future will be our children'.

They will have the same needs we are having today. They too have rights. (LAC)

In the consultations with younger children, there was a role play activity to get children's views on how resources such as food could be distributed in a way that left enough for children of the future. In one of these, after the children of today had not left enough for the children of the future, they redistributed. At the end, the food was not distributed equally but everyone got some food.

One group of children living in poor conditions had a different perspective about how enough resources should be preserved for those in the future:

There are people who are greedy in this world. They consume so much food and waste so much food. Let them

share their resources with the children of tomorrow. We are provided only very little resources to lead our lives today. How can we share this with children of future whom we do not even know? (Asia-Pacific)



Image 8: Example of adaptation of methods in an African consultation (using a hand drawn version of the technique presented in image 3)

6. Why and how should governments involve children in decisions about public expenditure?

We are experts in child-related spending! (Asia-Pacific)

The survey highlighted strong support for government engaging with children when making decisions about expenditure. The majority of children would like to be involved in this themselves and said that they would feel comfortable doing so^{xv}, as is demonstrated by their strong agreement to all the items presented in Table 6. However, there was also recognition that not all children would want to be involved or would be comfortable doing so.

Table 6: Children’s interest and capacity to be involved in expenditure

Agreement to:	Full sample	Region				
		% Agree/ strongly agree	% Agree/ Strongly agree			
Questions		Africa	Asia- Pacific	EE	LAC	WEOG
I think it is important that governments listen to children's views on how to spend money	87%	83%	85%	82%	97%	87%
I think children would be able to help governments make important decisions like this	77%	92%	75%	64%	93%	77%
I think it is important that governments take action based on children's views	84%	91%	79%	83%	96%	81%
I would like to be involved when the government makes decisions like these	81%	89%	76%	78%	92%	80%
I think most other children would like to be involved in making these decisions	76%	87%	71%	76%	91%	71%
I would feel comfortable being involved in government's decision making about important topics	79%	90%	71%	78%	93%	76%
I think most other children would feel comfortable doing this	68%	74%	63%	66%	88%	60%

Further analysis revealed some gender differences: girls were more positive across the items related to being involved and the first item relating to the perceived importance of governments listening to children^{xvi}. Statistically significant regional differences also emerged, with Latin America and Caribbean being consistently most positive^{xvii} (see Table 6). This suggests that the children who responded in this region place more value on the importance of governments listening to and taking action based on children’s views than the other regions and feel more interested, able and comfortable in getting involved in such decision making processes.

However, the respondents from this region also had the highest proportion of children who answered yes (17% in the survey) to having been involved in decision-making

about public spending. Therefore, these results must be contextualised within the experience of those children answering. That said, it suggests that those children who have experience of being involved in budget decision-making are more likely to be positive about children’s ability and willingness to participate.

Children in the face-to-face consultations were aware of the fact that they were entitled to have their views given due weight under the CRC. Some also referred to their rights under their country’s constitution, domestic law and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Children considered that they were well-positioned to advise governments on how to make decisions about spending for

children’s rights because they understood the impact of this spending in their lives.

Without the right to have views taken seriously, children will remain deprived. Child views should be reflected in budget formulation. (Asia-Pacific)

Some also emphasized that children were in a good position to speak about the impact of budgets cuts.

Only they know what they miss the most. (WEOG)

Furthermore, many groups referred to the need to consult the public generally, not just children:

The government should recognise the rights of all citizens, both young and old, by listening to the people’s opinion on matters of governance. Decision-making should come from the citizenry. (LAC)

Actively seeking children’s views

It is impossible for them to invest in us if they do not ask us what to invest in! We know; they should ask. (LAC)

We are our first defence; we have the right to be heard. If adults listen to us their planning will become more realistic and achievable. (Asia-Pacific)

Children believed that decision-makers at all levels of the government, including local, regional and national, should take active measures to seek the views of children on budgeting decisions and should include children directly in decision-making whenever possible.

There should always be a space for children’s voices to be heard. (Africa)

Many children identified a need for officials to go out to where children are located to

check the situation on the ground and to seek their views. While there was support for national bodies (such as Children’s Parliaments), many children wanted to be sure that views from all regions were fed in to this properly.

It can be better to support children’s groups and meetings to take place at grassroots level periodically to inform the national summit about the real situation of children on the ground. (Africa)

Supporting children to participate

Governments should make summarized budget statement available to the children to help them analyze and determine if government is really doing its job. (Africa)

Children in the survey were asked about the main challenges for children in getting involved in government decision making. The three main challenges (presented in Table 7) are all connected to children’s perception of support for their involvement.

Table 7: Biggest challenges for involving children

	% reporting this to be true
When adults don't listen to children	62%
When children don't have information about how government spends money	57%
When children don't know how government makes decisions about money	49%

Children recommended that governments ensure that there is accessible information available to assist children to understand public expenditure so that they could participate meaningfully.

The main thing is to let children know, to inform them, Above all when a child has something to say, that it isn't so complicated for him or her. (LAC)

Children recommended the need to involve adult facilitators to support them to understand the details of consultation processes and to assist them to make their views known to the government. They suggested that decision-makers should 'Try harder to listen to our voices!' (Asia-Pacific) by increasing their capacity to understand children's views.

Some children were concerned about the fact that adults might not think that they were able to have sensible views on issues related to public expenditure, when in fact many had interests not just on issues immediately affecting them but on global issues affecting their economies.

I think the government is belittling our capacities to learn and understand issues. (Asia-Pacific)

But the globalization scenario in the country is very much threatening job security to our parents. Thus we need to be involved in such huge decisions like 'Privatization, Liberalization and Globalization'. Every decision is linked to our wellbeing. (Asia-Pacific)

A further priority children raised in relation to consultations was that adults facilitating these should be respectful of children and their views. This meant that facilitators should ensure that children were invited and welcomed to give their views voluntarily (rather than coerced or manipulated), that consultations were conducted at a time and in a location that was appropriate for the children, that adults listened to children's views

carefully, and that adults ensured children were given information in accessible language and formats.

In one group, a good consultation was defined by children as:

Well-informed, well-prepared, adults respect for children's voice; follow up and action of children's recommendations. (Asia-Pacific)

In contrast, a bad consultation was:

Children are invited but intimidated to speak up, disregard of children's views by adults, 'imitation' child participation, no implementation of recommendations. (Asia-Pacific)

Being inclusive

Create panels that truly represent young people (different age brackets, all social and economic segments of society. (WEOG)

I think we should go out on the streets and find the children who are begging to ask their opinion, what are their greatest wishes in life and to convey that to someone who is in charge. (EE)

Children believed that governments should include the views of children from diverse ages and backgrounds and localities, as well as the organisations that worked with them and on their behalf. Children argued that these should reach out in particular to those with disabilities and those who do not speak the majority language. It was suggested that governments could make consultation processes known through methods that target children specifically, such as mass media or through schools.

Government must consult children from minority groups, including those with a disability, when drafting the budgets so that their needs will be

taken into consideration during the budget preparation process. (Africa)

Make consultations with all the children nationwide, taking into account the context...given that the reality of the eastern side of the country is not the same as the western side, or the rural side is different to the city. (LAC)

Many groups were interested in devising systems to ensure that the views of diverse groups of children were properly represented in national bodies:

The loss of information during this process is a danger that ought to be taken account and avoided (EE)

Acting on children's views

If you see change then you'll know government has done something' ... you see facilities being built. You have to see change. (Africa)

Maybe they need to be trained to understand our views. (EE)

Children recommended that governments should follow up on the proposals made by children during budgeting discussions, whether that is through government consultations or through more formal mechanisms for children submitting their proposals (e.g. youth parliaments discussing municipal spending), and offer feedback to the children about why decisions were taken to implement (or not) the children's recommendations. They emphasised that adults should involve children in monitoring the impact of spending.

In the survey 9% of the children had direct experience of participation in budget decision making. Often this was as part of youth councils or via NGOs. Of this sample, 90% enjoyed the experience, and 80% felt that the adults listened to their

views, which in turn made the children feel empowered and valued.

I felt important. (EE)

Children's recommendations for participation

- Media campaigns (WEOG)
- A child-led Facebook page (Africa).
- Video conferences with Minister (Asia-Pacific)
- Child Parliament can meet with the Finance Minister before the formulation of the budget (Africa)
- Peer research (EE)
- Schools have a dedicated budget for children to spend for their own use (Africa)
- A focal person in the local government who will listen and appropriately process the recommendations of children (Asia-Pacific)
- Suggestion boxes (Africa)
- Children's Councils at every level (Asia-Pacific)
- Invest in NGOs who can raise the importance of including children's opinions (EE)

However, only 53% felt that changes were made based on their views. Examples of positive action included: seeing policy change; governments carrying out further work based on children's input; and the realization of physical buildings/ services. However, such positive examples were in the minority. Often, when these children were asked what they would improve about this process, they cited action/change.

The need to take our opinions seriously, and not just provide the space so as to meet the requirement of listening to children. (WEOG)

Children in the face-to-face consultations also gave examples of having participated but not had their views taken seriously or followed up.

It was evident that they used our participation showing up in the media (in relation to a consultation that took place after the budget was finalised) (EE)

We tried to get an appointment with him for over a year, and not once could we go and see him, even though he told us that his office door is always open to us children. (Africa)



Image 8: Younger children deciding where to allocate money (WEOG)

7. What should the UN do to improve investment in children?

It's really hard to choose whether to help poor people here or in the whole world. Are we supposed to choose? Nobody in the whole world should be poor. (WEOG)

Children were not asked specifically about the role of the international community in relation to investment in children but issues related to this were raised in several face-to-face consultations. Some of these were directed to their own country. For example, some children suggested that their governments should seek further aid or stop paying international debt while others suggested that their countries needed to consider what amounted to a fair balance between the needs of children living there and those facing difficulty elsewhere. Several groups also had direct messages for the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Council. These have been collated in the following letter:

March 2015

Dear United Nations

"People at the UN should demand governments to invest in children" (LAC)

"The Committee on the Rights of the Child and Human Rights Council should demand to the Government to fulfil the CRC requirements" (EE)

"International organisations ought to be given more power to force states to guarantee the respect of the Convention in their respective countries and have better means to enforce the respect of the rights in countries that have signed the CRC" (WEOG)

**Yours faithfully,
Children from across the globe.**

This consultation with children was conducted, and the report written, with the support from the members of the Child Rights Connect Working Group on Investment in Children, i.e. African Child Policy Forum, Child Rights Coalition Asia, Child Rights Connect, Defence for Children Costa Rica, Eurochild, International Baby Food Action Network, Plan International, Redlamyc, Save the Children and UNICEF, and their member organizations. We also acknowledge the help of the Children’s Advisory Group (CRAG) from St Bride’s Primary School, Belfast, Northern Ireland and the Young Persons’ Advisory Group (YPAG), coordinated by Gill Hassard of the National Children’s Bureau, Northern Ireland. The members of the YPAG were Megan McEvoy Morgan, Catherine Vaughan, Christie Miskelly, Stephanie Flynn, Medb Wills, Beth Montgomery, and Chloe Templeton. Finally, thank you to all the children and partner organizations for taking the time to take part in this consultation.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this report represent the views of children that participated in this consultation and not necessarily the views of the NGOs assisting with the consultation process.



Endnotes

ⁱ See. Lundy, L., & McEvoy, L. (2012). Children's rights and research processes: Assisting children to (in) formed views. *Childhood, 19*(1), 129-144.

ⁱⁱ M=2.3, SD=.9

ⁱⁱⁱ Note that this further analysis of mean values was based on the agreement scale only (the 'don't know' was not presented on the Likert scale, rather as a separate option).

^{iv} P>.05

^v ANOVA – F (4,721.6)=10.1, P=<.001); Africa: M=2.27, SD=.86; Asia-Pacific: M=2.49, SD=.9; Eastern Europe: M=2.13, SD=.81; LAC: M=1.99, SD=.78; WEOG: M=2.27, SD=.88. The effect size (calculated using eta squared) was small = .04.

^{vi} Views taken seriously: 64% of boys selected this, compared to 55% of girls - χ^2 (1, N=1129)=8.9, p=.003; & Accessible healthcare: 55% of boys selected this, compared to 48% of girls χ^2 (1, N=1129)=5.5, p=.02. The effect sizes (calculated using Cramer's v) were small = .09 &.07

^{vii} Views taken seriously – Selected by: Africa = 66%; Asia-Pacific = 51%; EE=49%; LAC=80%; WEOG= 60%; χ^2 (4, N=1126)=52.3, p=<.001; Healthcare – Selected by: (In order of region, as above): 51%, 35%, 58%, 78%, 49% - χ^2 (4, N=1126)=92.4, p=<.001; Religion – Selected by (In order of region): 50%,33%, 31%, 30%, 27% - χ^2 (4, N=1126)=16.9, p=.002; Survival- Selected by: (In order of region): 47%, 42%, 38%, 63%, 37% - χ^2 (4, N=1126)=33.7, p=<.001; Access to child suitable info - Selected by: (In order of region): 69%, 44%, 37%, 72%, 48% - χ^2 (4, N=1126)=69.9, p=<.001; Play in safe places - Selected by: (In order of region): 58%, 56%, 53%, 81%, 51% - χ^2 (4, N=1126)=45.9, p=<.001; Privacy - Selected by: (In order of region): 55%, 49%, 42%, 59%, 39% - χ^2 (4, N=1126)=21.7, p=<.001; Education - Selected by: (In order of region): 44%, 48%, 58%, 86%, 49% - χ^2 (4, N=1126)=83.1, p=<.001; Family support - Selected by: (In order of region): 75%, 54%, 74%, 68%, 75% - χ^2 (4, N=1126)=43.6, p=<.001;

Protection - Selected by: (In order of region): 56%, 45%, 54%, 87%, 61% - χ^2 (4, N=1126)=84.3, p=<.001. The effect sizes (calculated using Cramer's v) ranged from .1-.3.

^{viii} M=2.2, SD =.9

^{ix} See endnote iii

^x Female (M=2.1, SD=.83); Male (M=2.3, SD=.97; t(711.5)=2.7, P=.007. The effect size (calculated using eta squared) was small = .007

^{xi} ANOVA – F (4,744)=7.9, p<.001; Africa: M=1.98, SD=.9; Asia-Pacific: M=2.38, SD=.88; Eastern Europe: M=2.13, SD=.82; LAC: M=1.95, SD = .78; WEOG: M= 2.18, SD=.96. The effect size (calculated using eta squared) was small = .03

^{xii} Disability - Selected by (In order of region): 60%, 48%, 70%, 78%, 58% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=54.1, P<.001;

Forced to work - Selected by (In order of region): 64%, 46%, 52%, 86%, 47% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=86.3, P<.001;

Living with little money - Selected by (In order of region): 65%, 61%, 72%, 73%, 78% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=23.2, P<.001;

Natural disaster - Selected by (In order of region): 42%, 29%, 49%, 41%, 37% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=26.8, P<.001;

Victims of conflict - Selected by (In order of region): 54%, 31%, 43%, 60%, 43% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=48.3, P<.001;

Seeking safety in new country - Selected by (In order of region): 43%, 25%, 21%, 53%, 40% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=66.5, P<.001;

Refugees - Selected by (In order of region): 38%, 23%, 36%, 26%, 45% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=36.8, P<.001;

Homeless - Selected by (In order of region): 70%, 50%, 71%, 57%, 79% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=64.2, P<.001;

Living in care - Selected by (In order of region): 26%, 30%, 31%, 47%, 45% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=29.7, P<.001;

Separated from family - Selected by (In order of region): 67%, 41%, 52%, 68%, 57% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=45.6, P<.001;

LGBT - Selected by (In order of region): 41%, 30%, 23%, 54%, 30% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=50.1, P<.001;

Minority - Selected by (In order of region): 39%, 17%, 36%, 49%, 37% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=69.7, P<.001;

Living rural/ remote - Selected by (In order of

region): 69%, 31%, 43%, 73%, 33% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=118.3, P<.001;

*Other - Selected by (In order of region): 17%, 1%, 3%, 24%, 5% - χ^2 (4, n = 1127)=114.3, P<.001. The effect sizes (calculated using Cramer's v) ranged from .1-.3.

*Note the 'other' responses very often included groups which could be categorised as above.

^{xiii} Don't waste money- 58% of boys selected this, compared to 43% of girls - χ^2 (1, n = 1131)=22.7, P<.001 & Spent fairly- 37% of girls selected this, compared to 31% of boys - χ^2 (1, n = 1131)=4.3, P=.037. The effect sizes (calculated using Cramer's v) ranged from .06/.1.

^{xiv} Tell us- Selected by (In order of region): 35%, 40%, 33%, 57%, 35% - χ^2 (4, n = 1129)=29.4, P<.001;

Positive difference- Selected by (In order of region): 37%, 25%, 38%, 26%, 28% - χ^2 (4, n = 1129)=16, P=.003;

Keep a record- Selected by (In order of region): 14%, 29%, 14%, 19%, 17% - χ^2 (4, n = 1129)=26.6, P<.001;

Think about how decisions affect children- Selected by (In order of region): 28%, 35%, 40%, 29%, 46% - χ^2 (4, n = 1129)=19.3, P<.001;

Enough for children in the future - Selected by (In order of region): 21%, 18%, 32%, 25%, 36% - χ^2 (4, n = 1129)=32.7, P<.001;

Spent properly- Selected by (In order of region): 25%, 43%, 21%, 19%, 31% - χ^2 (4, n = 1129)=47.7, P<.001;

Keep your promises - Selected by (In order of region): 34%, 35%, 51%, 44%, 38% - χ^2 (4, n = 1129)=19.2, P<.001;

Spent fairly across all groups of children - Selected by (In order of region): 50%, 29%, 36%, 31%, 39% - χ^2 (4, n = 1129)=18.6, P<.001.

The effect sizes (calculated using Cramer's v) ranged from .09-.2.

^{xv}

Please tell us how much you agree with the following statements	Mean	SD
I think it is important that governments listen to children's views on how to spend money	3.42	.72
I think children would be able to help governments make important decisions like this	3.27	.73

I think it is important that governments take action based on children's views	3.38	.69
I would like to be involved when the government makes decisions like these	3.39	.73
I think most other children would like to be involved in making these decisions	3.28	.7
I would feel comfortable being involved in government's decision making about important topics like this	3.38	.73
I think most other children would feel comfortable doing this	3.17	.77

^{xvi} Important governments listen: girls (M=3.5, SD=.7), boys (M=3.3, SD=.79; t(786.4)=-2.78, P=.006 (the effect size was small – eta squared = .007); Like to be involved: girls (M=3.42, SD=.7), boys (M=3.3, SD=.75; t(1013)=-2.19, p=.029 (the effect size was small – eta squared = .005); Most other children like to be involved: girls (M=3.3, SD=.65), Male (M= 3.2, SD=7.7; t(711)=-2.6, p=.009 (the effect size was small – eta squared = .007).

^{xvii} Table: Mean values across interest and capacity questions – by region

I think it is important that governments listen to children's views on how to spend money			
Region	N	Mean	SD
Africa	94	3.29	.946
Asia-Pacific	346	3.43	.675
EE	214	3.22	.753
LAC	169	3.67	.564
WEOG	245	3.46	.760
Total	1068	3.42	.735
I think children would be able to help governments make important decisions like this			
Region	N	Mean	SD
Africa	96	3.42	.749
Asia-Pacific	317	3.25	.669
EE	190	3.02	.756

LAC	161	3.58	.576
WEOG	230	3.20	.786
Total	994	3.27	.729

I think it is important that governments take action based on children's views

Region	N	Mean	SD
Africa	93	3.52	.716
Asia-Pacific	337	3.31	.707
EE	214	3.21	.702
LAC	167	3.61	.558
WEOG	226	3.39	.699
Total	1037	3.37	.695

I would like to be involved when the government makes decisions like these

Region	N	Mean	SD
Africa	95	3.43	.781
Asia-Pacific	324	3.35	.749
EE	205	3.24	.732
LAC	162	3.65	.584
WEOG	228	3.37	.719
Total	1014	3.39	.728

I think most other children would like to be involved in making these decisions

Region	N	Mean	SD
Africa	90	3.41	.701
Asia-Pacific	304	3.24	.687
EE	199	3.17	.704
LAC	156	3.58	.611
WEOG	209	3.18	.711
Total	958	3.28	.700

I would feel comfortable being involved in government's decision making about important topics like this

Region	N	Mean	SD
Africa	96	3.43	.750
Asia-Pacific	314	3.15	.758
EE	200	3.22	.666
LAC	159	3.64	.588
WEOG	219	3.31	.738
Total	988	3.31	.728

I think most other children would feel comfortable doing this

Region	N	Mean	SD
Africa	92	3.22	.947
Asia-Pacific	287	3.10	.760
EE	176	3.10	.668
LAC	151	3.51	.620
WEOG	192	3.07	.806
Total	898	3.17	.768

(All effect sizes for the above differences were small – eta squared ranging from .008-.06)
