



## A MESSAGE FROM JOINING FORCES CEOS

In the midst of all the announcements affecting our sector, the Joining Forces (JF) CEOs decided that it was important to share a message to reaffirm their commitment to Joining Forces. After their extended meeting in February, they sent a joint communication to everyone involved in the Joining Forces movement to emphasize their support to JF country and regional platforms:

SUBJECT: NOW, MORE THAN EVER, WE STAND AS JOINING FORCES!

The world is changing, and the challenges we face as a sector are greater than ever. Yet, in these moments, we are reminded of the reasons Joining Forces exists. Through the work of our countries and regional platforms, we continuously demonstrate our strong core commitment to ending violence against children and advancing children's rights, no matter the obstacles.

Now more than ever, our collective impact matters. As we navigate these shifts, the CEOs of Joining Forces, together with the Steering Committee and the Secretariat, convened to reaffirm our unwavering support to our country offices and regional platforms, and ensure all that our work remains responsive to the needs of children worldwide. As we see efforts for children and their rights undermined, we are convinced that coming together and putting our mission above all is the best way we can help the children we serve. Despite the shrinking civic space and the limited funding for advocacy and programmes, our commitment to children must not waver. We will continue to focus on the JF Call to Action we initially launched through our policy brief in 2024: *A Seat at the Table: Investing in children's participation as a cornerstone of children's rights*. This year we will put our work into the implementation of the Call to Action 2.0, focused on increased child participation.

We must adapt, innovate, and collaborate to ensure that children's voices are truly heard, and their needs are met. While we will not be able to scale up this year, we will focus on concrete outcomes at national and regional levels building on the great work already accomplished. We will continue to assess the current context and adapt the JF strategy accordingly – to make sure we keep delivering high impact for children. As a global alliance, Joining Forces is uniquely positioned to navigate this evolving landscape. By working together, aligning our efforts, and reaffirming our shared priorities, we can ensure that our mission remains at the forefront.

The Steering Committee is committed to setting up discussions on key priorities, ensuring that we remain adaptive and aligned in our response. We are grateful for each of you. Your dedication, resilience, and passion drive this movement forward.

Together, we are stronger. Together, we are Joining Forces

## COUNTRY AND REGION UPDATES

There are now 30 countries and 3 regions with Joining Forces platforms. Country teams remain extremely committed to Joining Forces. The Secretariat received 18 reports from countries and regions for the period July to December 2024. Thank you all for sharing these wonderful updates!

All the countries are reporting joint activities on child participation. In November 2024, JF Bangladesh held a child and youth forum on meaningful participation in advocacy with 35 child and youth participants featuring capacity building sessions for children and discussions on advocacy priorities. JF Bolivia's dynamic children advisory council took part in advocacy efforts around the Summit of the Future and G20 in Brazil, culminating in a girl activist from Bolivia traveling to New York for the summit. JF Brazil led JF global advocacy efforts ahead and during the G20 in Brazil, making sure a letter written by children with their demands reached decision makers. JF Colombia led efforts to ensure children's voices were heard at the first Ministerial Conference to End Violence Against Children which took place in Bogota, Colombia, in November 2024 (check out [December's JF newsletter](#) for more information on Joining Forces initiative around the MinCon).

In 2024, Joining Forces launched the Call to Action and its policy brief [A Seat at the Table: Investing in children's participation as a cornerstone of children's rights](#). Seven champion countries received enhanced support and small grants from the JF Secretariat to implement activities. In El Salvador, the funds helped to organise a forum on child participation, an activity which was decided by the children themselves. The event better positioned Joining Forces to be involved in the implementation of the national child participation strategy. In Indonesia, a children's group was established, and members agreed their structure and priorities. In the Philippines, a children's Agenda on Ending Violence Against Children was produced as well as a compendium of child participation good practices. JF Peru worked on the alternative report to the UNCRC focused on violence against children and the alternative children's report produced by child led organisations. JF Uganda contributed to the 2024 National Children's Parliament; bringing together 100 children at the Uganda National Parliament premises. In Kenya, JF worked with partners to assist children to produce and submit a memorandum on child friendly budgeting. A new Call to Action will be launched soon, stay tuned!

Joining Forces country and regional teams continue to advocate for child rights and, in particular to end violence against children; in Mali JF is addressing the worst forms of child labour. In India, JF is supporting efforts to implement child protection services at local level. JF Zambia produced the policy brief on the Rights of Children in the Digital Environment as well as 4 joint statements on Ending Violence Against Children and child rights.

A new phase of German funded [JF-Child Protection in Emergencies](#) project started in August 2024 : [Joining Forces for Food Security and Child Protection in Emergencies](#). In the past months, the Joining Forces for Food Security and Child Protection in Emergencies team has finalized the needs assessment, as well as the Child Protection Risk Analysis and Rapid Gender Analysis, providing a solid base to kick-start project implementation. Some of the main activities implemented so far include: a distribution of dignity kits, support to teams in terms of safeguarding & PSHEA, gender & inclusion and environmental awareness.



Participation of Fabiana of the Bolivia Joining Forces Children and Adolescents Advisory Council at the Summit of the Future in New York.



Mock UPR session held by JF Bangladesh



Children's forum in El Salvador



In 2024, the [JOFA-ACTE](#) project saw significant progress across all four contexts (Mali, Malawi, Burkina Faso and Madagascar). These achievements include at the micro level the stronger engagement of children, communities, parents, and tutors pushing for children's participation. The project also made strides in strengthening relationships with both local and national authorities in each country. Across the four contexts, there has been a consolidation of children's clubs, along with strengthening their capacities to further develop their work and provide psychosocial support. Advocacy led by children has been strengthened through children's parliaments, with a focus on increasing their involvement in formulating their demands. In partnership with national governmental bodies, there were celebrations of the **International Day of the African Child** and the **International Day Against Child Labour** across the contexts. Moreover, the project has made progress on the operationalisation of Income Generating Activities responding to the local needs of families and children and contributing to community resilience. The consortium members have also pushed forward a collective learning agenda that capitalises on their hands-on expertise and published its first learning brief on child-sensitive social protection policies in both French and English: [Learning brief on social protection](#). This is the first of a series of learning briefs addressing child labour with a more holistic approach taking into account socio-economic and climate issues.



The Minister of Labour in Malawi joined the children in a solidarity march organised to mark the commemoration of the International Day Against Child Labour

**Find many more examples of Joining Forces achievements in [this overview](#).**

## SECRETARIAT UPDATES

Caroline Inglesant came back from maternity leave at the end of January. Simon Domingo left his position as maternity cover for Caroline and came back to the Secretariat as a consultant.

The Safeguarding reference group held a webinar in December 2024 on safer online child participation. All the materials are available here : [2024\\_12\\_Webinar on Safe Online Child Participation](#)

**NEW resource** : The guide to children's participation in advocacy was launched on 31 January. It offers child rights advocates and practitioners extensive resources on how to ensure that children's participation in advocacy activities is meaningful. You may download a copy of the guide in English, Spanish, and French through this link: <https://joining-forces.org/publications/guide-to-child-participation-in-advocacy/>. Please feel free to share with your teams and networks.

### UPCOMING EVENTS :

- Consultations on the new global action plan (invitations shared with coordinators): 1 April and 22 April at 1 PM CET.
- Regional engagement call Asia-Africa: 10 June 2025 at 10 AM CET.
- Webinar "Lessons from the needs assessment of JF food security and child protection in emergencies project" : 13 May 2025
- Webinar "Learning from the Call to Action: A seat at the table" : tbc

JF RESOURCES : <https://wi365.sharepoint.com/sites/Joining-Forces>