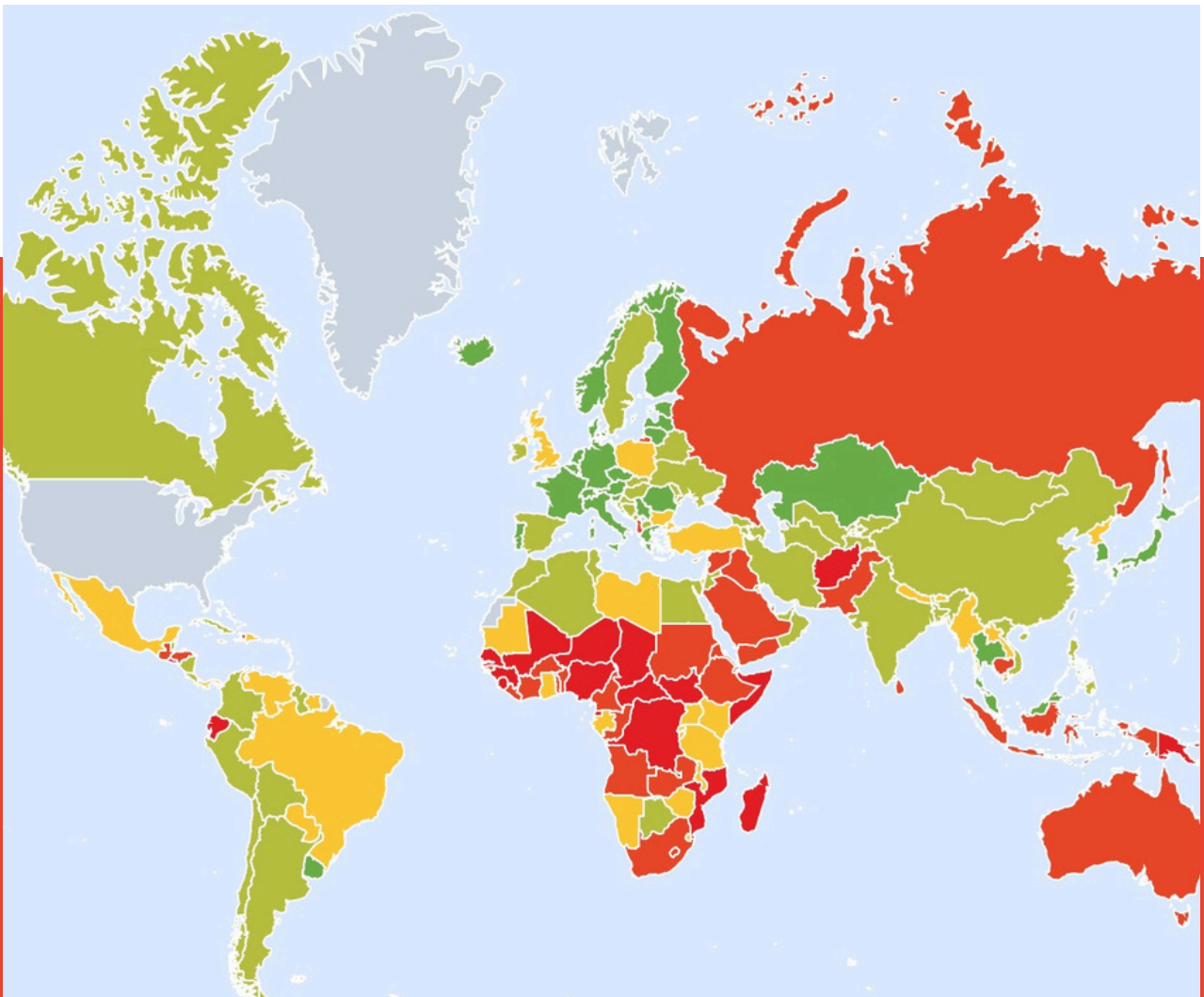


# KidsRights Index 2026

Child-friendly version



## About



**KidsRights Foundation** is an international children's rights organisation that promotes the wellbeing of vulnerable children across the world and stands up for their rights. KidsRights sees children as changemakers: people with the power to move the world. It supports children in voicing their opinions and in taking action to bring about change.



**Erasmus School of Economics (ESE)**, part of Erasmus University Rotterdam, studies how money, businesses and governments work, now and in the future. ESE takes care of the calculations behind the KidsRights Index.



**The International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)**, also part of Erasmus University Rotterdam, studies how to make the world fairer and better for everyone. It brings together people from all over the world to work on big problems like poverty, health and climate change.

## Authors of the Child-friendly KidsRights Index 2026:

This document is based on the **KidsRights Index Report 2026**, written by Avinash Reddy Pichhili (KidsRights) and Prof. Karin Arts (ISS), and supported by data inputs from Mirthe Hendriks (ESE), Philip Hans Franses (ESE) and Ekaterina Evdokimova (ISS).

## Acknowledgments:

We appreciate the inputs of our **State of Youth Country Representatives** - Sa'id Ashaik (25 y), Yasin Ahmed (19 y), Muhammad Idris (23 y), Tamanji Logodi (27 y), and the **Youth Board** members - Alwande Moyo (19 y), Shreya Ghosh (22 y), Alya Sabira (21 y), in improving this document.

## What to expect

### What is the KidsRights Index?

The KidsRights Index is the first and only global ranking that measures, every year, how children's rights are respected around the world. The Index is made by the KidsRights Foundation together with Erasmus University Rotterdam. It is based on the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** – the most important international agreement on children's rights.

The **2026 KidsRights Index** is the 14th annual report and covers **194 countries**. Policymakers, researchers, journalists, organisations and businesses all over the world use the KidsRights Index to push for the improvement of children's rights.

### Why a child-friendly version?

All children have the right to access information in a way that they can understand. Articles 13, 17 and 28 of the **CRC** say so. This child-friendly version explains the main findings of the KidsRights Index 2026 in clear language, so that you can learn about your rights, understand how countries are performing, and **take action** in your own country to improve children's rights.

You can use the information from the KidsRights Index to support your changemaking activities. For example, you can use it to spread awareness about children's rights, to engage with local and community leaders and to develop activities that can address important issues in your country.

### Join State of Youth

**Join State of Youth - a global youth movement and digital platform, initiated by KidsRights, where young people aged 12 to 29 connect, learn, and create change together.**

#### Connect globally!

- Share your findings with the State of Youth community.
- Team up and share your solutions. Work together with young changemakers globally!

## What does the KidsRights Index measure?

The KidsRights Index looks at **5** key areas of children's rights, also called **Domains**. These 5 domains are together measured by **22 indicators** – pieces of children's rights data available for every country. The KidsRights Index ranks are based on high-quality data published by the United Nations, World Health Organization, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.



### Domain 1: Life



### Domain 2: Health



### Domain 3: Education



### Domain 4: Protection



### Domain 5: Enabling Environment



### NEW in the 2026 KidsRights Index

2 new indicators are added to the Domain Health: **overweight** (children under 5) and **obesity** (children 5 to 19), as they are affecting children globally.

## Note for adults and organisations using this report

- **Teachers:** Start lessons and discussions about children's rights using this report.
- **NGOs:** Use the KidsRights Index rankings to talk with children about what is going well and what must improve in your country.
- **Parents and caregivers:** Explore the interactive [KidsRights Index dashboard](#) together with your children. Encourage them to look into other countries.
- **All stakeholders:** Ask children to think about the child rights challenges they see in their own community, and encourage their solutions.

The KidsRights Index 2026 highlights two extremely concerning developments: serious child rights violations caused by wars, and the fast-growing problem of obesity among children globally. These developments are explained in the next two sections, before we discuss the performance of countries on the overall KidsRights Index and on each domain of the Index.

## Children's rights and wars

Children's rights are taking a big hit because of wars. Beyond the danger of getting hurt, children lose access to the basic things they need just to live and grow. Wars are destroying schools, hospitals, and food supplies.

**1 in 5**  
children  
globally lives  
within 50 km  
of a war

**70%**  
of global  
scarcity is  
caused by  
wars

While the world spends more and more on the military (up 41% in last 10 years), less money is left for healthcare and education for children.

Even though international laws say that children must be protected during war, the reality on the ground is terrifyingly different for millions of children. Children are being targeted on purpose: In many wars, children are being attacked and hurt on purpose, not just by accident.

War ruins every child right: The countries with the worst violence against children during wars are also the worst at providing basic needs like healthcare, schools, and safety for children.



**Bana Alabed (16 years),  
International Children's  
Peace Prize winner 2025**

*"We often speak about war in moments: the attack, the displacement, the loss. But children experience it as a constant presence. It can shape where we go, what we learn, whom we trust, and what we come to believe is normal."*

*"When a child is displaced, education is often disrupted at the very moment when learning, stability and belonging matter most. Children may have to enter unfamiliar schools, learn new languages, navigate new cultures and find their place in communities they never expected to be part of. These experiences can shape not only our education, but also our sense of identity, belonging and psychological wellbeing."*

*"That is why protecting children in conflict cannot be measured only by whether they survive it. We must also ask what kind of childhood, education and sense of belonging we are leaving them with."*

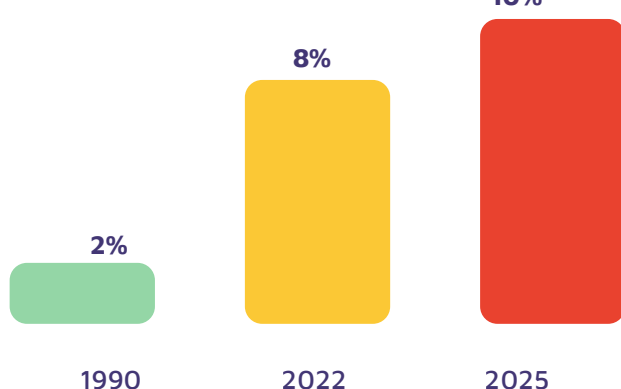


[Click here to learn more about children's rights and wars](#)

## Growing up healthy: the obesity epidemic

All children should have access to nutritious food to stay healthy. In 2025, for the first time ever, more school-age children in the world were living with obesity than with underweight. Obesity is now affecting more than 1 in 10 school-age children worldwide.

**Obesity among children and young people aged 5 to 19, worldwide**



Childhood obesity is most common in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa.

The highest rates of childhood obesity are in Pacific island countries: Cook Islands (37.5%), Nauru (32.9%) and Tonga (32.5%).

### Obesity is a children's rights issue

Childhood obesity is not simply caused by a personal choice. Children are growing up in environments which promote unhealthy food: places full of cheap and highly processed food, heavy advertising of unhealthy food, and too few safe spaces to play and move.

Under Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, governments have a duty to protect your right to health – for example by limiting the advertisement of unhealthy food, placing higher taxes on sugary drinks and making healthier food easy to buy.

**391 million children and young people aged 5 to 19 are living with overweight – double the number in the year 2000.**



#### Ask and find out

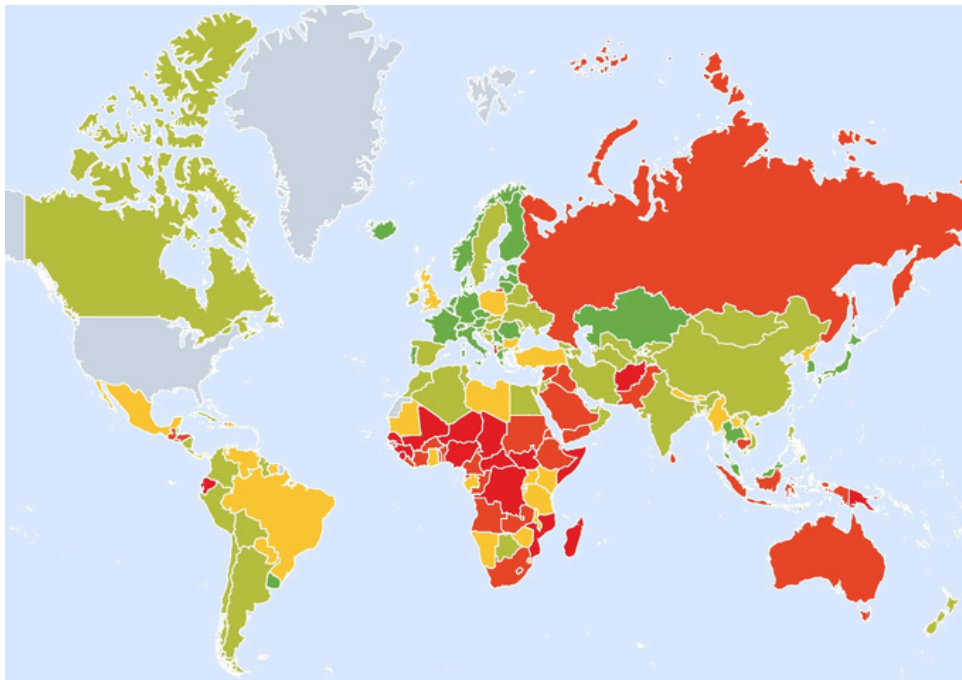
- How does your school make healthy food easy to choose?
- Does your country have rules about advertising unhealthy food to children?



**Click here to learn more about childhood obesity**



## KidsRights Index 2026 results



- Cluster 1 – doing best
- Cluster 2
- Cluster 3
- Cluster 4
- Cluster 5 – doing worst



### Clusters

Groups of countries where child rights are implemented similarly

The KidsRights Index reveals that countries are falling behind in protecting children's rights. In fact, only **5 countries improved** to a better cluster group, while **31 countries dropped** to a worse one. **Western Europe** is the only region where most countries (23 of 32 countries) are in Cluster 1.

Luxembourg, Iceland, Monaco, Germany and Norway are the best performing countries in the KidsRights Index 2026.

**All countries urgently need to step up their efforts to protect children's rights!**

### Find and share information

**Look up how your country scores on the KidsRights Index. Is it performing better or worse than before?**

#### Try this

- Join your school or youth council and share your findings.
- Quote the Index in school projects, debates and social media posts about children's rights.

## Highest overall rank changes

Country rankings in the KidsRights Index increase or decrease every year. Big jumps, up or down, show that the decisions of governments directly improves or harms a child's life and future.

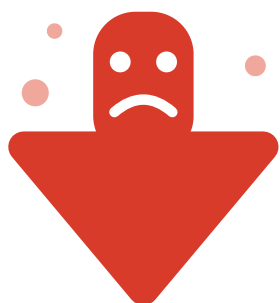
### Highest rank increase in the KidsRights Index 2026



|   |              |      |
|---|--------------|------|
| 1 | Romania      | ▲ 81 |
| 2 | Nauru        | ▲ 37 |
| 3 | San Marino   | ▲ 25 |
| 4 | Slovakia     | ▲ 24 |
| 5 | Cook Islands | ▲ 19 |

**Romania** climbed 81 ranks in the KidsRights Index 2026 (from 108 to 27!) because of better laws and budget for children.

**Nauru** rose 37 ranks thanks to investments in children's healthcare and education. **San Marino** (+25 ranks) and **Slovakia** (+24 ranks) also improved in their rankings.



### Highest rank decrease in the KidsRights Index 2026

|   |           |       |
|---|-----------|-------|
| 1 | Qatar     | ▼ 139 |
| 2 | Ecuador   | ▼ 106 |
| 3 | Honduras  | ▼ 70  |
| 4 | Indonesia | ▼ 57  |
| 5 | Peru      | ▼ 24  |

**Qatar** decreased by 139 ranks (from 18 to 157!) and **Ecuador** fell 106 ranks after very critical reviews by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

**Honduras** (–70 ranks) and **Indonesia** (–57 ranks) also fell sharply.



## Highest rank changes per Domain

Countries also receive a rank for each Domain in the KidsRights Index, showing if a country has performed better or worse in areas such as education, health, protection etc. In this section, to show the change in Domain ranks, '+' is used for a country that improved its rank, and '-' is used for a country that fell in rank.



### Domain 1: Life

**Every child has the right to live. Countries should do their best for children to live and grow in the best conditions.**

- ▲ **Seychelles +109 ranks;** focus on education for young children, and better training for teachers.
- ▼ **Libya -17 ranks;** deaths of children under-5 years increased three times due to ongoing wars and collapse of the healthcare system.



### Domain 2: Health

**Children have the right to the best healthcare. Countries should provide all necessary services and information on child health, nutrition, safe water and sanitation.**

- ▲ **Tajikistan +86 ranks;** lesser underweight children (under-5) than before.
- ▼ **Australia -116 ranks;** 1 in 4 children (under-5) is overweight. Highest in the world as children consume a lot of unhealthy food and drinks.



### Domain 3: Education

**Every child has the right to education. Countries should provide free primary education and make sure all children can attend school regularly.**

- ▲ **Nauru +23 ranks;** fewer children are dying before their 5th birthday due to improved healthcare services.
- ▼ **Palau -94 ranks;** secondary education is not accessible. Schools are hard to reach from outlying islands.

## Highest rank changes per Domain

In the KidsRights Index, doing badly in one Domain cannot be hidden by doing well in another, because all children's rights are equally important.



### Domain 4: Protection

Every child has the right to be protected from harm. Countries should protect children from all harmful situations.

- ▲ **United Arab Emirates +52 ranks;** Number of births to adolescent girls has reduced significantly.
- ▼ **Botswana -27 ranks;** Number of births to adolescent girls has increased.

### Engage with decision-makers

Check your country score in Domains Health or Education. Spot what needs fixing (like better school infrastructure or accessible hospitals)

#### Try this

- Tell your mayor, member of parliament or children's ombudsperson about the issues you identified, and ask for improvement.

Do you want to know how all countries are performing on children's rights? Explore the details on the [interactive KidsRights Index Dashboard!](#)



### Domain 5: Enabling Environment

Country's laws and actions decide how children are treated. All countries should create conditions to respect, protect, promote and fulfil children's rights.

- ▲ **Romania +137 ranks;** introduced better laws and budget for children.
- ▼ **Qatar -183 ranks;** needs to improve laws and increase budget to improve services for children.

## Domain Enabling Environment

The Domain Enabling Environment is scored using the Concluding Observations issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child ("Committee"). This Committee is made of 18 child rights experts from all over the world. Together, they check how countries are implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child. All countries are required to report to this Committee once in every five years.

After reviewing the country report and speaking to the country representatives, the Committee issues Concluding Observations for the country.

In 2025, the Committee reviewed and issued Concluding Observations to 13 countries: Brazil, Ecuador, Eritrea, Gambia, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Norway, Peru, Qatar, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Slovakia.

7 of these 13 countries were late in reporting to the Committee by at least 5 years!

### How can a country improve 'enabling environment' for children's rights?

- ensuring the safety of all children (no discrimination)
- considering the best interests of children when making decisions about them;
- always listening to children's views;
- providing sufficient national budget to implement children's rights;
- improving national laws to implement the CRC.



#### Ask and find out

- ? Is there a child rights expert from your country who is on this Committee?
- ? When was the last time your country reported to this Committee?



#### Concluding Observations

Think of Concluding Observations as report cards of each country on how well they are implementing children's rights.

They also provide recommendations to countries on what to do to better protect children's rights.

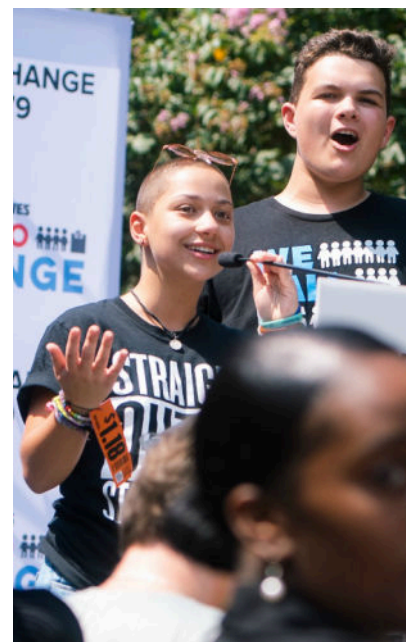
## Climate change and children's rights

### Countries should adopt child-sensitive climate resilience measures!

When climate change data is added to the KidsRights Index 2026, almost every country's score reduced. Only 12 countries managed to avoid a drop. This highlights a huge problem: countries around the world are not doing enough to protect children from the impacts of climate change.

All countries should adopt child-sensitive climate resilience measures - steps to protect children from the impact of climate change by making sure children can access basic services (education, healthcare, food, clean water etc.) even during extreme weather conditions.

Countries should also include children in discussing and developing climate resilience policies.



### Think, Ask and Act

Visit your country page on our [interactive dashboard](#) to check how your country's performance on the KidsRights Index changes if climate change data is added.

#### Try this

- Think about what you need to feel safer from the impact of climate change.
- Ask your local leaders about their plans to protect children from extreme weather conditions.
- Find out how to share your inputs with your government to better protect you from climate change.

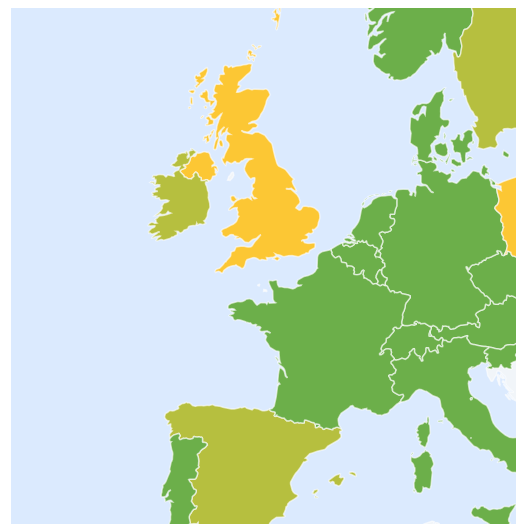
Use our [Advocacy Toolkit](#) for some more ideas on using the KidsRights Index to support your changemaking activities.

## Regional insights

### How are different regions implementing children's rights?

The KidsRights Index can help you understand a country's performance on children's rights when compared to other countries from its region. It also provides information on which regions of the world need to do more to provide better conditions for children to live and grow.

The following table shows the best and worst performing country of each region in the KidsRights Index 2026. It also shows the average regional KidsRights Index score (average of the scores of all countries in each region) for each region.



| Region                                 | Best performing country | Worst performing country | Regional average score (out of 1) |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Western Europe</b>                  | Luxembourg              | United Kingdom           | <b>0.799 (highest)</b>            |
| <b>East Asia and Pacific</b>           | Thailand                | Papua New Guinea         | 0.656                             |
| <b>Eastern Europe and Central Asia</b> | kazakhstan              | Russian Federation       | 0.707                             |
| <b>Eastern and Southern Africa</b>     | Botswana                | South Sudan              | 0.519                             |
| <b>West and Central Africa</b>         | Cape Verde              | Chad                     | <b>0.448 (lowest)</b>             |
| <b>Middle East and North Africa</b>    | Morocco                 | Iraq                     | 0.655                             |
| <b>Latin America and Caribbean</b>     | Uruguay                 | El Salvador              | 0.644                             |
| <b>South Asia</b>                      | India                   | Afghanistan              | 0.551                             |

Check out the KidsRights Index [regional insights](#) to find out more about how different countries are implementing children's rights in your region?

# KidsRights Index 2026

Child-friendly version



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