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# 2023 National Children and Youth Assembly Report

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with support from the Department of Children and Youth  
(Ministry of Social Development and Human Security)  
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# Message from the Children and Youth Council of Thailand



**Ms. Nada Binrohem**

President, Children and Youth Council of Thailand

The National Children and Youth Assembly serves as a platform for children and youth to exchange ideas, learn about various topics, and critically, to voice their opinions and address the issues that matter to them. Under the guiding principle of 'Kids Think, Kids Act, Kids Lead, Adults Support', the National Children and Youth Assembly uses a participatory mechanism which recognises that addressing the challenges faced by children and youth and fostering their development is not solely the responsibility of individuals but rather a collective duty involving all sectors.

The 2023 National Children and Youth Assembly, which took place from 22–24 July 2023, was organised by the Children and Youth Council of Thailand (CYCT) in collaboration with the Department of Children and Youth (DCY) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in

Thailand. The aim of the event was to provide a platform for children and youth to voice their opinions on various issues affecting their lives.

This report documents the findings of an online survey conducted by the CYCT, DCY and UNICEF between 15 May–30 June 2023, and the outcomes of the 2023 National Children and Youth Assembly, including resolutions agreed upon during the Assembly, and highlights the recommendations of children and youth on six key issues that matter to them: economic and employment issues, education, health, violence and protection, the environment, and participation. We hope that this information will guide the future work of government agencies and relevant organisations related to children and youth.



## Background

Under Section 19 (10) of the National Child and Youth Development Promotion Act, B.E. 2550 (2007) and its second amendment, B.E. 2560 (2017), the DCY under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) is required to organise a National Children and Youth Assembly at least once a year, in collaboration with the CYCT.

The National Children and Youth Assembly enables a process where children and young people come together to gather ideas, exchange knowledge, collaborate, and address issues related to children and youth at various levels, including communities, sub-districts, districts, provinces, Bangkok, and the national level. It is grounded in the key principles of participation and inclusivity.

The objectives of the 2023 Assembly were:

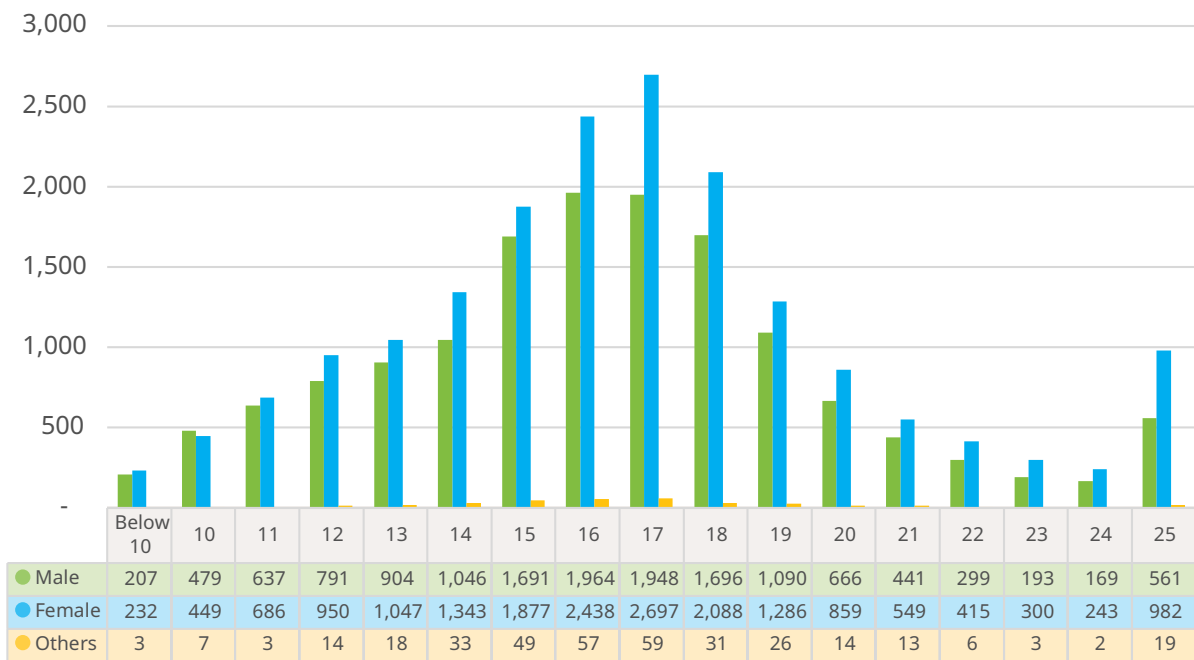
1. To provide a platform for children and youth, particularly those facing difficulties and lacking opportunities to voice their concerns to the government, and to express their opinions on various issues that affect their lives;
2. To share information concerning existing laws, regulations, and policies, to enable youth representatives to express their opinions; and
3. To engage policymakers and relevant sectors regarding policy recommendations by young people.

# Methodology

To provide a platform for listening to the voices of children and youth, two activities were implemented:

- 1) An **online survey** was conducted from 15 May–30 June 2023 to understand the situation facing children and youth. A total of 33,580 children and youth under the age of 25 from all over the country participated, comprising 14,782 males, 18,441 females and 357 children and youth who identify as non-binary. Within the survey participants, there were 5,020 representatives from various children and youth councils at all levels. The figure below shows a breakdown of the participants according to gender and age.

**Number of survey respondents categorised by gender and age**



- 2) The **National Children and Youth Assembly** took place from 22–24 July 2023, with representatives from local and national children and youth councils, as well as participants from diverse youth groups, including ethnic youth, youth with disabilities, LGBTQI+ youth, youth from the three southernmost provinces, and youth engaged in political activities. Over 160 individuals participated in the Assembly and exchanged insights on issues that affect the life of young people in Thailand, and collectively developed recommendations.



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# Survey Results and Assembly Recommendations

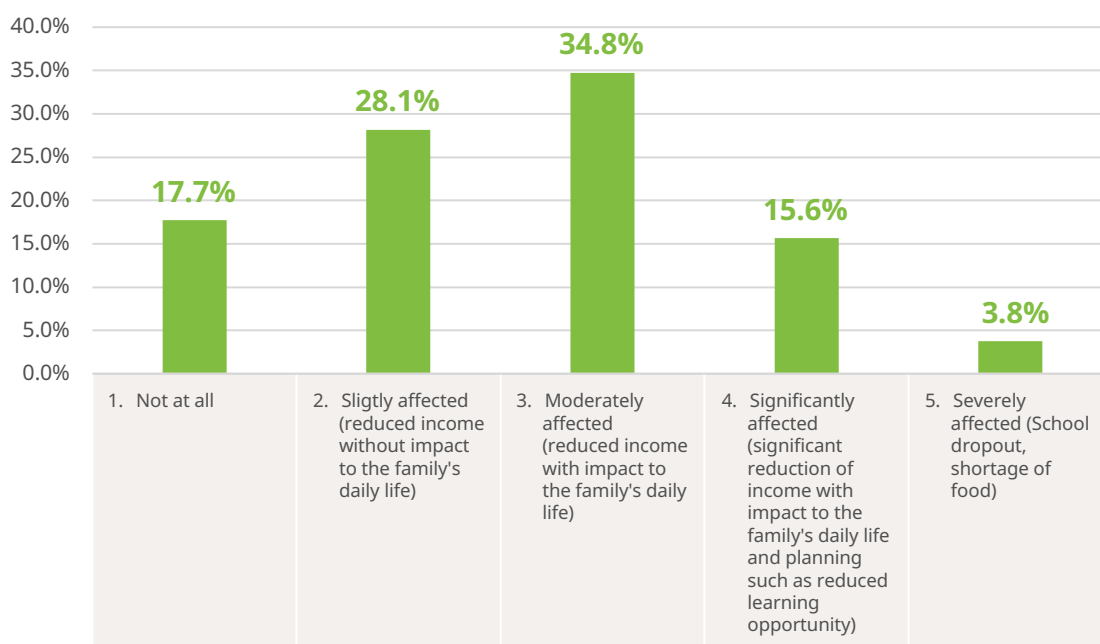
This section of the report covers findings on six urgent issues affecting Thai children and youth. These relate to the economic and employment situation, education, health, the environment, violence and protection, and the participation of children and youth in Thailand. Each topic is discussed in more detail below.

## 1) Economic and Employment Issues

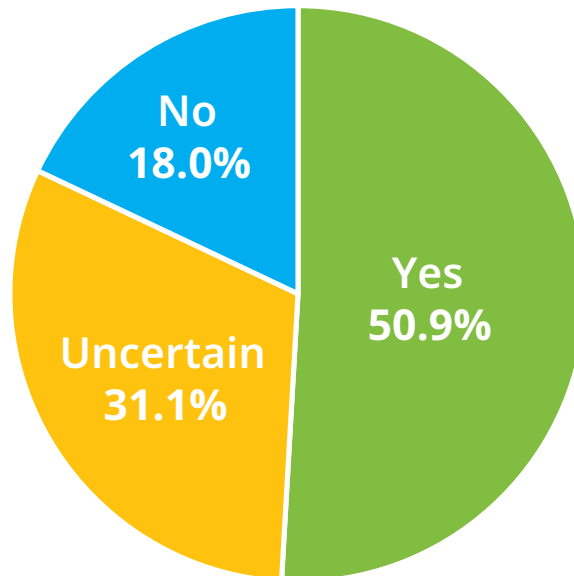


**The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the economic prosperity of families,** which has inevitably affected the lives of young Thais. For example, **34.8 per cent of survey respondents reported that they have been moderately affected by the situation,** particularly in terms of income and the impact on their family's daily lives. Meanwhile, **15.6 per cent stated that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on their daily lives** (affecting income and learning opportunities), and 3.8 per cent reported having been so severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that they had to drop out of school and/or experienced food shortages. **Over half of the respondents (50.9 per cent) also mentioned that their families currently have significantly higher expenses than their total income.**

**My family and I have been economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic**



**I feel that the expenses in my family are significantly higher than our family income**



**Assembly participants also mentioned a lack of opportunities to contribute to the world of work**, either due to barriers relating to disability or due to the lack of labour market opportunities in the local area, as shown in the quotes below.

*“People with disabilities are qualified individuals, but what hurts the most is that they often don’t have the opportunity to showcase their abilities...”*

*(Apichart Hongpat, male youth)*

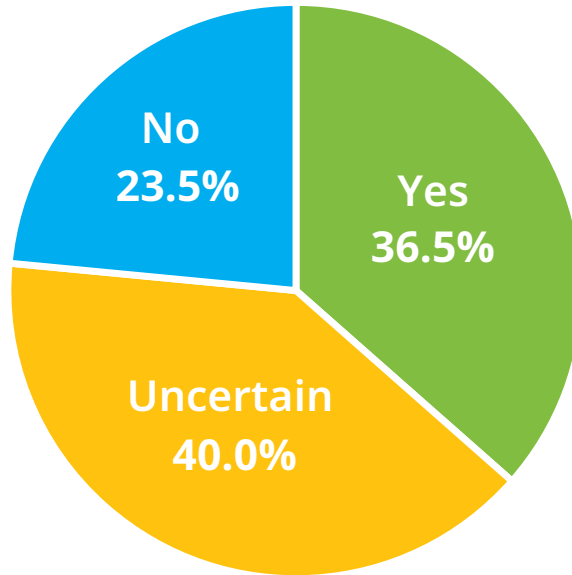
*“...in fact, every province has good and interesting tourist destinations. Unfortunately, various factors hinder the growth of these tourist attractions, and the government lacks a consistent policy to support children and youth in promoting tourism. They understand that all that’s needed is to provide them with opportunities to participate and showcase their abilities...”*

*(Triwut Kruthong, male youth)*

This lack of opportunities may be linked to the prevalence of youth who are not engaged in the education system, employment, or training, falling into the NEET (Not in Education, Employability or Training) category. More than one third (36.5 per cent) of survey respondents indicated that they have noticed a significant number of NEET youth within their own communities. However, as discussed more in the next section on education, the increasing NEET rate may also be related to the fact that young people think that the school curricula are not currently meeting the needs of young people entering the labour market.



**I have noticed an increasing number of children and youth in my community who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)**



During the Assembly, young people formulated three main recommendations and resolutions to address these challenges related to economic and employment issues:

Recommendations	Assembly Resolutions
1) Develop school curricula that meet labour market demands.	To request the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, the Ministry of Labour, and relevant agencies to promote and support the acquisition of knowledge and skills that align with current and future social and economic conditions and address long-term unemployment issues.
2) Enable children and youth to share ideas to develop the tourism industry in their region.	To request the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and relevant agencies to promote and support the involvement of children and youth in the development of tourism plans and discussions, to stimulate the economy.
3) Support the agricultural sector and farmers to increase their production rates.	To request the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and related agencies to promote and support the acquisition of green and marketing skills among children and youth, enabling the application of technology to enhance the value of agricultural products.

## 2) Educational Issues



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on educational opportunities for children and youth, particularly in terms of the indirect costs associated with education, as shown in the quote below.

*"...expenses that strain their parents' income and the cost of living have prevented some children from pursuing further education to enhance their potential..."*

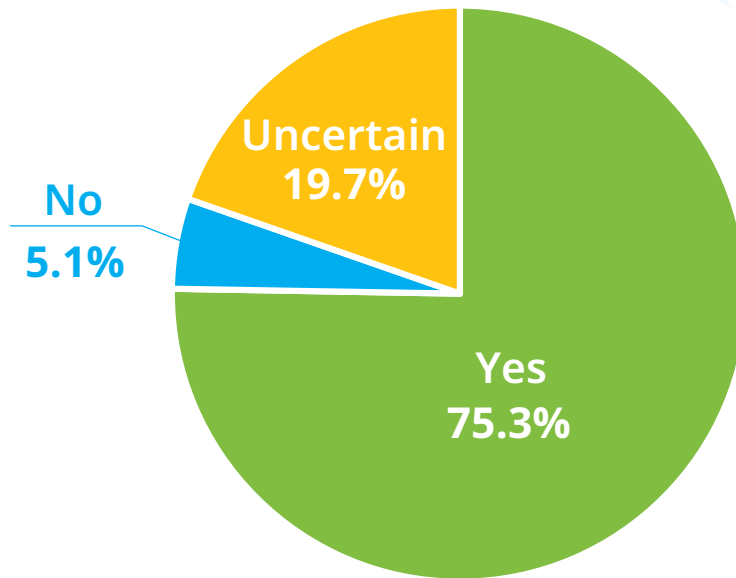
*(Yansubha Phakdee, female youth)*

When asked about what types of government welfare assistance and access they needed the most, children and youth identified financial assistance for education such as scholarships (35 per cent) and cost reductions for tuition fees and dormitory expenses (13.8 per cent) as being the most pressing issues.

What types of government welfare assistance and access do you need the most?	
Scholarship	35.0%
Tuition fee reduction/dormitory fee reduction	13.8%
Support from government economic stimulus schemes	12.1%
Vocational skills training	10.7%
Support of technology equipment for learning	9.5%
On-site internship support	8.6%
Financial assistance for children and youth affected by COVID-19	6.1%
Guidance and skill development for job applicants	4.1%

Although the results of the online survey also revealed that the majority of children and youth (75.3 per cent) believe that all groups of children and youth can efficiently access student loan funds, **more than a quarter of respondents felt that access to student loan funds is not efficient.**

**All children and youth from every group can efficiently access student loan funds**



Aside from financial issues relating to education, findings revealed that the **school curricula may not align with young people’s needs**. When children and youth were asked to identify three topics that they were interested in learning, learning English was the most popular answer (32.8 per cent), while information on children’s rights (21 per cent), other languages (20.7 per cent), creative skills (19.7 per cent) and soft skills (18.5 per cent) also featured highly.

Which 3 topics are you most interested to learn about?	
English language	32.8%
Courses related to current curriculum	25.9%
Children’s rights	21.0%
Other languages	20.7%
Skill for recreation activities (art, sport, music, novel writing, cooking etc.)	19.7%
Soft skills (leadership, communication, relationship building etc.)	18.5%
Online business	17.2%
Self-care	13.6%
Self-reflection activities	11.2%
Sex education/pregnancy prevention	9.2%
Emotion and stress management	8.5%

Which 3 topics are you most interested to learn about?	
IT and technology	8.4%
Financial literacy	8.0%
Stock exchange investment	7.9%
Volunteering activities	6.9%
Drug prevention	6.4%
Communication skills for communicating with family members	6.1%
Eco-friendly life practice	6.1%
Investment in digital currency	5.1%
Entrepreneurship	3.8%

However, **when asked if the current educational curriculum helps develop essential skills for the twenty-first century or the future world of work**, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork, **only 59.5 per cent of respondents agreed**, while one third of respondents (33.3 per cent) were unsure, and an additional 7.3 per cent disagreed with the statement.

Issues regarding the **suitability of school curricula to meet the demands of the modern world**, and the limited ways in which knowledge is imparted and tested in the Thai education system, were also raised during the Assembly, as shown in the quote below.

*“...if the academic curriculum still doesn’t address these issues, learning becomes futile. Studying solely for exams, children are reduced to mere memorisation, lacking true comprehension...”*

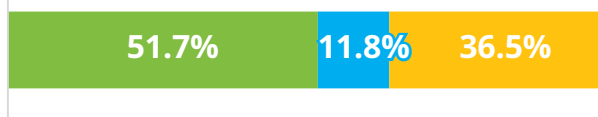
*Sutipong Pernpanya, male youth)*

Relatedly, in terms of future job opportunities, **only 51.7 per cent of respondents believe that the current curriculum meets the requirements of the job market and can be applied in daily life**. Meanwhile, 36.5 per cent were unsure, while 11.8 per cent disagreed or felt that the current curriculum does not align with the job market’s demands.

I believe that the current educational curriculum can contribute to the development of essential skills needed in the 21st century or the future world, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration with others, creativity, and more.



I believe the current curriculum meets the demands of the job market and can be applied in daily life



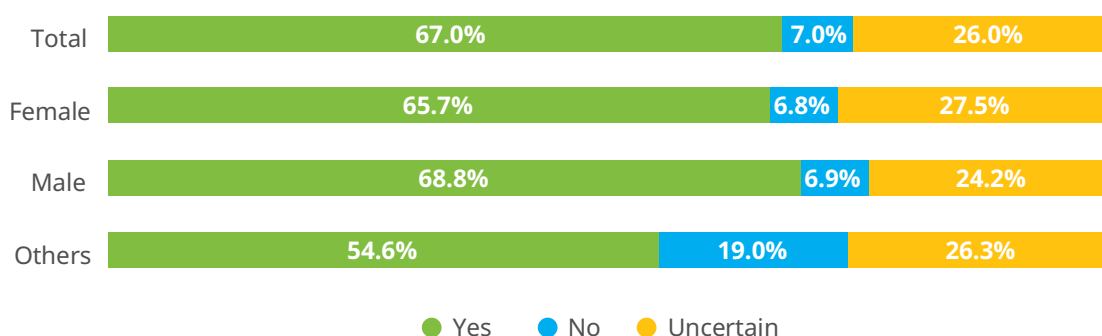
Aside from their observations about the curriculum, **children and youth want schools to be safe spaces for everyone to learn effectively and reach their potential.** Most survey respondents (67 per cent) agreed that their school provides a safe and welcoming environment for everyone. However, more than a quarter (26 per cent) were uncertain, and 7 per cent indicated that their school was not safe or friendly for all.

*“...children’s problems cannot be solved by one person alone. School counsellors may not be safe persons from whom counsel can be sought, so I wish for schools to be safer spaces...”*

*(Youth participant)*

When examining responses by gender identity, **respondents who identified as non-binary or as LGBTQI+ were nearly three times more likely to disagree with the statement that school is a safe and friendly place** compared to those who identified as male or female. This suggests that more needs to be done to create a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTQI+ children and youth.

### The school is a safe and friendly place for all children and young people



The National Children and Youth Assembly agreed upon on six main recommendations to improve educational experiences and opportunities for young Thai people:

Recommendations	Assembly Resolutions
1) Assist all youth to access education, especially those currently outside the system.	To request that the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the Ministry of Education join forces to explore measures to ensure that children and youth who are currently outside the education system are included, including those who do not have Thai citizenship. This aims to uphold their fundamental rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
2) Review existing educational fees and indirect costs and ensure appropriate budgetary support to reduce educational disparities.	To request the Ministry of Education to review education fees and allocate budgets as necessary to promote equal access to education to the most vulnerable young people. To ensure transparency, students and parents should be informed in advance of any upcoming expenses (the cost of textbooks, school uniform, and other activities) by school administrators.
3) Revise current assessment methods.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request the Ministry of Education to re-evaluate and potentially modify current national assessments and examinations for students, to align with the variations in curricula across schools in Thailand.</li> <li>2. To request that the Ministry of Education includes children and youth representatives as part of the committee to propose amendments to the National Education Act.</li> </ol>
4) Enhance provision of support personnel to alleviate teacher workload.	To request the Ministry of Education to establish guidelines for hiring academic support personnel to alleviate teachers' additional responsibilities and enhance teaching and learning efficiency.
5) Enhance channels for young people to contribute to the design of school curricula and regulations.	To request that all schools provide a platform for young people to participate in proposing, improving, and revising school curricula and regulations in educational institutions.
6) Increase access to educational welfare for students.	To request the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance to gather information regarding the student economic situation, focusing on enhancing essential benefits such as internet access, transportation, and more, as well as increasing scholarship opportunities for all target groups to promote greater equity and equality.

### 3) Health Issues



When asked about eating and exercise behaviours, the CYCT online survey found that **the majority of children and youth had inappropriate eating habits**, including constant snacking and consuming unhealthy snacks, with only 12 per cent reporting a daily consumption of 400 grams of fruits and vegetables, the recommended amount by the Ministry of Health.

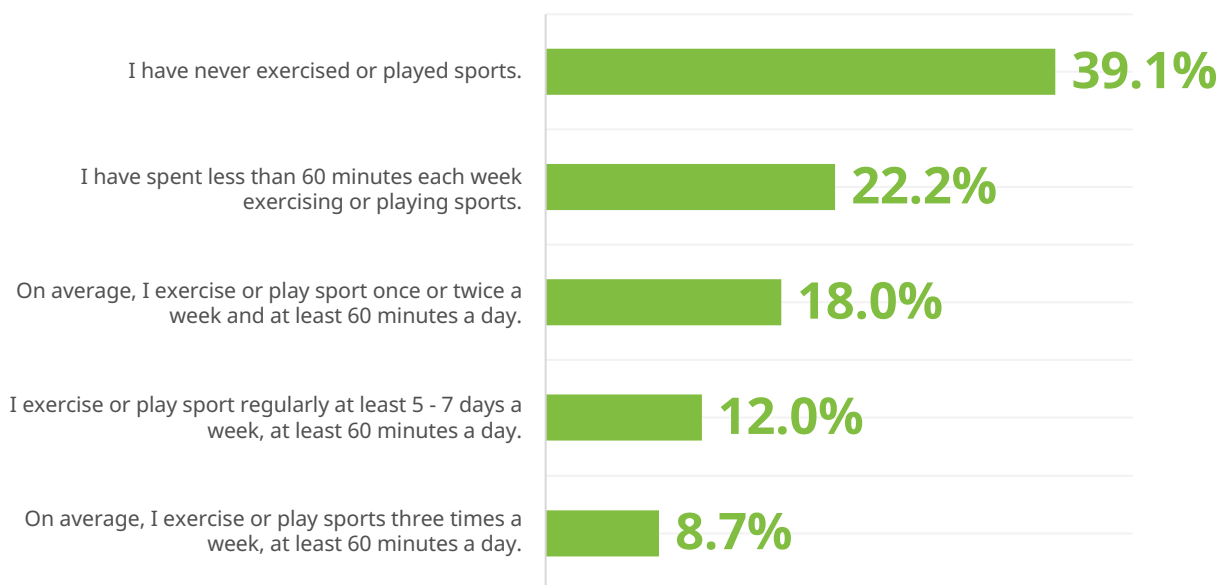
What eating habits do you regularly practise?	
Irregular meal schedules	58.5%
Preference for frequent snacking, unhealthy snacks, or chewy treats	37.8%
Regular consumption of sweet snacks and sugary beverages, such as cakes, ice cream, and bubble milk tea	30.0%
Not having breakfast	26.6%
Consumption of 400 grams of fruits and vegetables daily	21.0%
Frequent appetite loss due to emotional and psychological factors	17.2%
Intermittent fasting or reduced food intake for weight and shape maintenance	13.7%
Preference for fast food such as burgers, fries, and pizza	12.1%
Consumption of weight loss supplements	3.7%

**Key factors influencing the food choices of children and youth include the availability of and access to food (70.3 per cent)**, followed by the cost of food (50.3 per cent), family influence (32.5 per cent) and the influence of peers (20.8 per cent).

What are the key factors influencing your decisions on food choices?	
Availability of and access to food	70.3%
Food prices	50.3%
Family	32.5%
Peers	20.8%
Food marketing (influencers, promotions, etc.)	12.0%
Religious beliefs	3.9%

Additionally, **one third of children and youth (39.1 per cent) stated that they never engage in any exercise or sporting activities**, or participate in less than 60 minutes of physical activity each week (22.2 per cent).

### My exercise behaviour



As well as considering factors that influence their physical health, **young people are aware of the importance of good mental health**, as shown in the quote below.

*“Mental health is the foundation of well-being, as without a strong mind, one cannot have a healthy body...”*

*(Youth participant)*

When asked to reflect on their mental health, **nearly half of survey respondents (46.74 per cent) indicated that they did not experience negative emotions** such as anxiety leading to sleeplessness, feelings of loneliness, or a lack of close friends. However, **6.8 per cent of children and youth reported having had suicidal thoughts in the past month prior to the survey**. When data was disaggregated by gender, the group with the highest response to this question was the LGBTQI+ community, at 18 per cent, nearly three times the average.

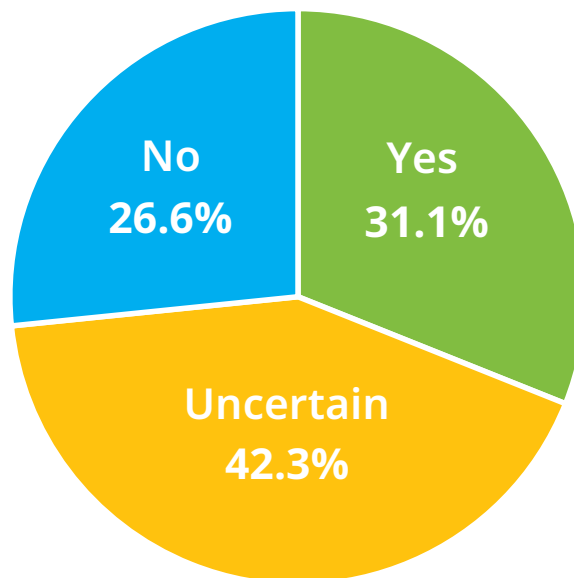


### My emotions during the past month (multiple answers possible)

I often worry about certain things that make me unable to sleep at night	31.68%
I always feel lonely	26.76%
I feel like I don't have a close friend	9.42%
I have suicidal thoughts	6.80%
None of these	46.74%

Furthermore, **only 31.1 per cent of the respondents were aware of where they could access mental health services**, while 42.3 per cent were uncertain, and 26.6 per cent admitted to having no knowledge of this information.

### I know where to seek mental health services



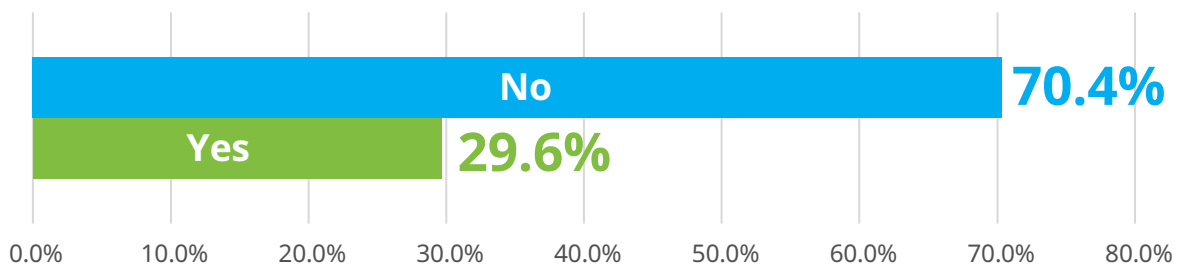
Regarding the use of digital healthcare services, **41.2 per cent of young people viewed digital technologies as being a broad, helpful tool to manage a range of factors relating to health and well-being** (see chart below), 28.6 per cent viewed digital technologies primarily as a means to access health information.

**What is the most important way in which digital technologies can help manage health and well-being?**

Health information	28.6%
Health monitoring (period tracking, BMI tracking, etc.)	8.6%
Access to initial health screening	8.4%
Confidential advice/counseling	4.1%
Follow-up on treatment	3.7%
No travel costs associated with access to the service	3.2%
No need to wait to see a doctor at the hospital	2.2%
All of the above	41.2%

Despite this, **the majority of respondents (70.4 per cent) stated that they did not use or had never used digital health services.** This suggests that more could be done to promote the use of digital technologies to help young people manage their own health and well-being.

**Do you use digital health services?**



Aside from the data gathered by the online survey, the Assembly also discussed other health concerns, including the **risks associated with cannabis and e-cigarette use**, and on **strengthening the use of data** to enable healthcare services to utilize information on children and young people’s health effectively, as shown in the quote below.

*“Big Data is essential because medical records are at the core of issues within the public healthcare system...”*

*(Fatawan Chokchai Paisan, female youth)*

The recommendations developed by the National Children and Youth Assembly regarding health are as follows:

Recommendations	Assembly Resolutions
1) Review free access to cannabis and e-cigarettes	To request the Ministry of Public Health and related agencies to conduct further research on the advantages and disadvantages of reintroducing e-cigarettes and cannabis into a system that can be regulated by the state.
2) Improve provision and access to mental health support for children and youth.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request the Ministry of Health to establish a child and youth-friendly mental health service centre and enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Health's current system to provide mental health support to children and youth.</li> <li>2. To request the Ministry of Public Health to enhance the sustainability and promote the development of applications for children's and youth mental health services, and to ensure that applications are genuinely accessible to children and youth.</li> </ol>
3) Strengthen connections between healthcare database systems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request the Ministry of Health, Local Administrative Organisations, and relevant agencies to collaborate with the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society in connecting all healthcare services' data (Big Data), such as local sub-district health promotion hospitals, clinics, public and private hospitals, etc – using a single ID card.</li> <li>2. To request the Ministry of Public Health and relevant agencies to use this data when forecasting health issues, aiming to advance preventative measures to promote the health of children and youth.</li> </ol>



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## 4) Violence and Protection Issues



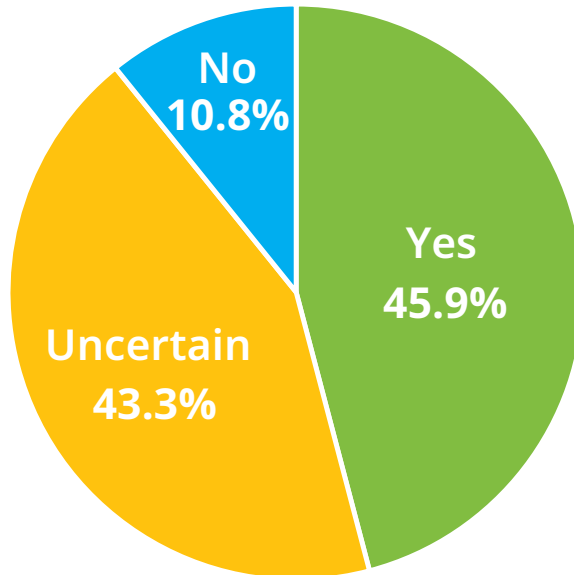
**Safety from the risk of violence is a concern for children and youth in Thailand.** While the online survey only asked children and youth about challenges relating to online safety, the discussions conducted during the Assembly identified further areas of concern, including violence in the home, at school, in religious institutions, and considered the geographical and sociocultural factors which may place a child or youth at risk. In addition, the Assembly considered the ways in which laws in Thailand could be clarified or amended to protect children from harm.

**Online violence is a significant issue faced by today's children and youth.** When asked about the challenges encountered by children and youth online, **more than 55.3 per cent of respondents identified cyberbullying as the most prominent issue**, followed by online gambling (43.6 per cent), and gaming addiction (32.3 per cent).

In your opinion, what are the top three major challenges that children and young people are currently encountering online?	
Cyberbullying	55.3%
Online gambling	43.6%
Gaming addiction	32.3%
Financial fraud	22.3%
Child sexual abuse	21.6%
Sexual coercion	20.7%
Access to violent content	20.0%
Accessing age-inappropriate pornography or sexual content	19.3%
Invasion of privacy	17.2%
Personal data breach/identity theft	16.8%
Online sexual exploitation and harassment	14.9%
Romantic scams	7.8%
Self-generated sexual content by youth	5.4%

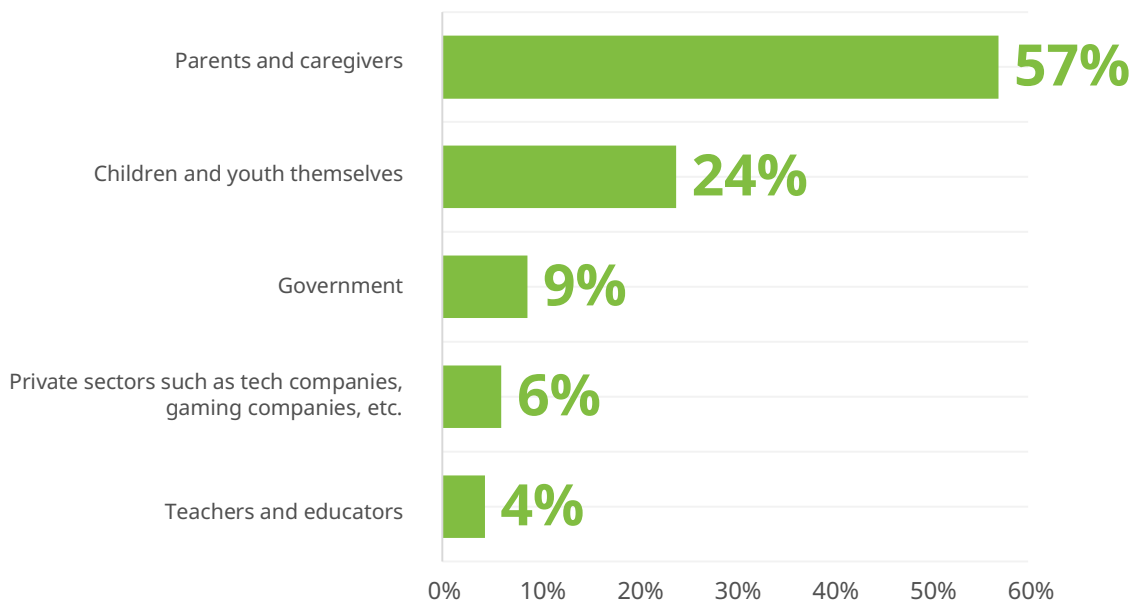
However, **when asked about seeking help to confront issues faced in the online world, only 45.9 per cent were aware of where to seek assistance**, with over half of respondents uncertain or completely unaware of where to turn if they encountered problems (10.8 per cent had no idea, and 43.3 per cent were unsure).

**When confronted with issues in the online world, I know where to seek assistance**



In terms of who should have the greatest responsibility for ensuring the safety of young people online, **most children and youth feel that the responsibility for ensuring online safety primarily falls on parents and caregivers (57 per cent)**, while 23.9 think that children and youth themselves should take on this responsibility, and 8.7 per cent feel that the government should be accountable.

**Who should have the greatest responsibility for ensuring the safety of children and young people in the online world?**



The recommendations developed by the National Children and Youth Assembly on violence and protection are as follows:

Recommendations	Assembly Resolutions
1) Prevent, monitor, and raise awareness on children and youth experiencing violence in family settings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request the CYCT and the Children and Youth Network to act as a network for surveillance and to assist in forwarding information about domestic violence risks among communities to relevant agencies.</li> <li>2. To request the CYCT, along with network partners working in the area of domestic violence, to collaboratively advocate for public awareness regarding the importance and knowledge of children’s rights and violence prevention. The Department of Women’s Affairs and Family Development under the MSDHS should be the primary entity responsible for conducting these activities.</li> <li>3. To request the DCY to disseminate information and enhance the community’s capacity to independently manage domestic violence risks, and strengthen the enforcement of relevant laws.</li> </ol>
2) Prevent abuse and harassment of children in educational institutions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request the Ministry of Education to enhance measures for aiding children affected by physical rights violations and verbal abuse by educational staff.</li> <li>2. To request the Ministry of Education to establish measures to safeguard children in educational institutions.</li> </ol>
3) Prevent child sexual abuse occurring in religious institutions.	To request the National Office of Buddhism to initiate actions regarding the protection of novices in accordance with the Child Protection Act B.E. 2546 (2003).
4) Reduce violence affecting children and youth in the three southernmost provinces	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request the lifting of the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations in the three southernmost provinces, in order to reduce the power of state officials to conduct unwarranted residential searches which affect children and youth.</li> <li>2. To request the Office of the Prime Minister to diminish the authority of the Internal Security Directorate within the area in order to reduce the abuse of children and youth.</li> </ol>

Recommendations	Assembly Resolutions
<p>5) Promote the safeguarding and reproductive rights of children and youth from ethnic minorities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request relevant agencies responsible for safeguarding children under Article 34 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which deals with the provision of safeguards against child exploitation and sexual acts, to work together to ensure that children and youth from ethnic minorities are protected, especially regarding the issue of forced marriages. The Ministry of Education is also requested to disseminate information in various indigenous languages for children and youth, enabling them to better access and understand human rights principles as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.</li> <li>2. To request the strengthening of reproductive health rights for children and youth from ethnic minorities. They have the right to make independent decisions about whether or not to live as a couple and the right to make decisions about creating a family, including decisions about having or not having children, the number of children, spacing between children, and adoption.</li> </ol>
<p>6) Educate children and youth on how to deal with incidences of online sexual harassment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request schools to develop and incorporate information on how to be safe online into the curriculum to raise awareness among children and youth about online dangers, reducing the risk of them becoming victims of sexual exploitation.</li> <li>2. To request the CYCT to organise educational activities related to grooming to promote awareness of online dangers among children and youth.</li> </ol>
<p>7) Amend or repeal laws which limit the freedoms and rights of children and youth.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request the Ministry of Interior to repeal or amend the Amplifier Advertising Control Act B.E. 2493 (1950), as it requires updating to be in line with the current situation.</li> <li>2. To request the Ministry of Justice to clarify the term “mental harm” under the Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Disappearance Act, B.E. 2565 (2022) because there is currently no diagnosis of what constitutes mental harm.</li> <li>3. To request the Office of the Prime Minister to repeal the Public Gathering Act, B.E. 2558 (2015), as it contradicts the right to freedom of assembly and is enforced alongside similar laws governing various offences currently in effect.</li> <li>4. To request the Ministry of Justice to establish appropriate scope and guidelines for juvenile prosecutions, considering the best interests of children and youth.</li> </ol>

## 5) Environmental Issues



**Environmental issues are of paramount concern to today's children and youth as they have a direct impact on their quality of life.** Although the online survey did not ask children and youth about environmental issues, the following quotes from participants of the Assembly highlight some of the urgent concerns of children and youth in Thailand.

*"In Chiang Mai, there is a P.M.2.5 dust problem. Some people lack the means to protect themselves, as if they don't have the right to breathe..."*

*(Tanruethai Taenrat, female youth)*

*"Dust from mining was deposited in the same area, forming hills. When it rains, this dust dissolves into the water sources, contaminating the water. Villagers are unable to use the water for drinking or farming..."*

*(Asneeya Srisawat, female youth)*

*"Solving the issue of biodiversity loss isn't a repair or remedy, as once it's lost, it's lost forever..."*

*(Kampanat Yomsuk, male youth)*

Among the most pressing issues explored by children and youth during the Assembly were **problems related to environmental infrastructure, urban infrastructure networks** that require efficient management and control, and **natural disasters and anthropogenic catastrophes which affect the vulnerability of infrastructure** in developing cities. Additionally, **children and youth recognise that Thailand faces challenges including greenhouse gas emissions** from the industrial sector, **climate change issues** associated with the greenhouse gas emissions of transportation systems that contribute to climate change, **global warming** resulting from waste management practices, and **smog caused by PM 2.5 dust**, which has adverse effects on both short-term and long-term health outcomes.





The proposals from the National Children and Youth Assembly on environmental issues are as follows:

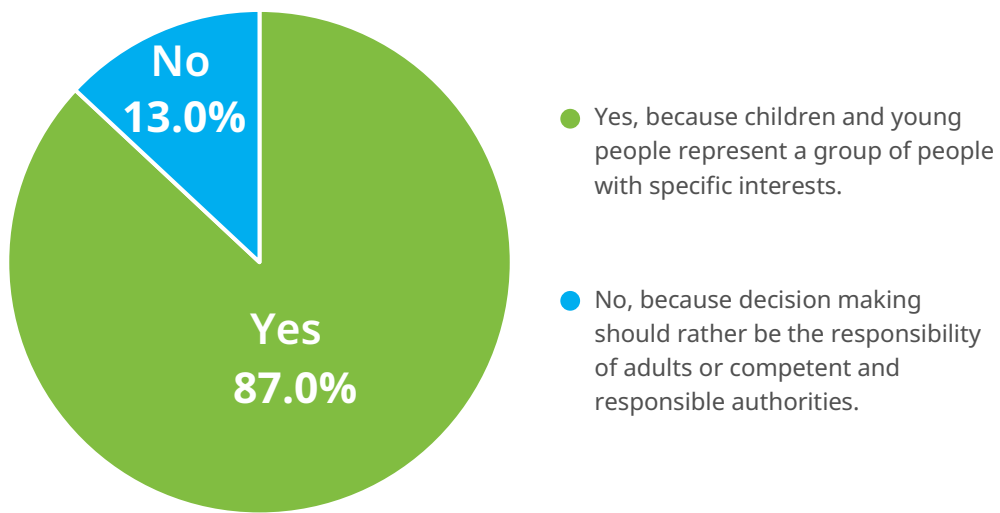
Recommendation	Assembly Resolution
1) Prevent and reduce air pollution.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request the CYCT and the Children and Youth Network to become members of the National Environment Board.</li> <li>2. To request the Ministry of Finance to establish a policy for taxing air pollution emissions, with oversight and guidance in principle from the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment.</li> <li>3. To request the Budget Bureau under the Prime Minister’s Office to allocate a budget for supporting the reduction of air pollution sources.</li> </ol>
2) Improve waste disposal effectiveness and efficiency.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Public Health to enhance waste disposal policies by introducing incentives for increased waste separation, such as bottle recycling programmes.</li> <li>2. To request the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Public Health to collaborate in establishing comprehensive waste management standards for all areas and to provide support in terms of knowledge, funding, and innovations to promote green entrepreneurship in waste management.</li> <li>3. To request the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Education, and the Board of Investment to allocate resources to support small entrepreneurs in becoming green entrepreneurs.</li> </ol>
3) Prevent and address biodiversity loss, and include children and youth as active participants in the process.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request the Ministry of Education to promote nature-based learning through direct exploration of the natural world, considering children and youth both within and outside the education system.</li> <li>2. To request the Ministry of Finance to offer tax incentives to the private sector involved in natural resource and environmental conservation, as well as the establishment of vertical green spaces following ecosystem principles, with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment providing supervisory assistance.</li> <li>3. To request the CYCT, along with the Children and Youth Network, to be a part of policy design, allowing them to participate in monitoring progress, and in designing innovations that mitigate adverse effects. This should be done with the support of the National Innovation Agency to foster innovative ideas that address the issues.</li> </ol>

## 6) Participation Issues



**Children and youth strongly feel that they should participate in decision making at all levels.** The majority of online respondents (87 per cent) believe that children and youth have specific interests which should be taken into account, and that their voices should contribute to the decisions that affect their lives.

**Do you think that children and young people should participate in decision-making at all levels (family, school, community)?**

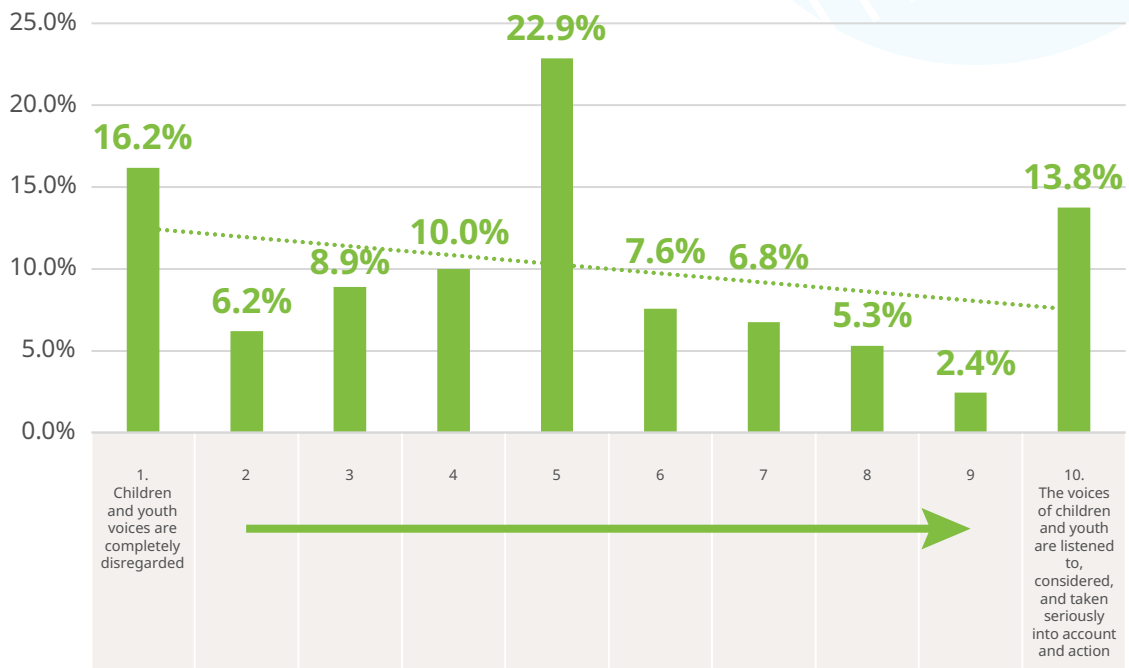


Yet according to the online survey, **the majority of children and youth do not feel that their opinions are listened to or taken seriously by adults.** When asked to provide a score to reflect what extent adults listen to the voices of children and youth in Thai society, children and youth gave an average score of 5 out of 10. However, at the same time, 13.8 per cent of children and young people feel that their voices are listened to, considered and taken seriously into account by adults, giving a full score of 10.



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**To what extent do adults in Thai society listen to the voices of children and young people?**

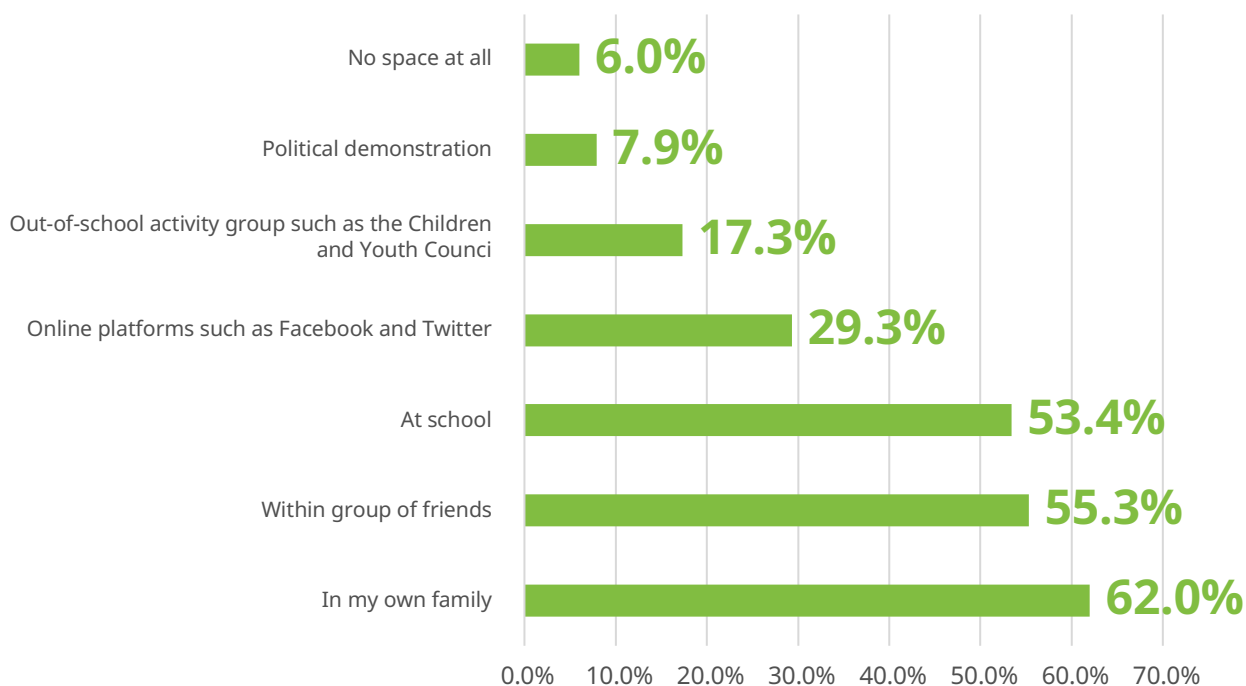


Regarding areas of engagement, **most children and young people (62 percent) feel that they exercise their right to participate the most within their families**, followed by peer groups (55.3 per cent), schools and educational institutions (53.4 per cent), and online spaces (29.3 per cent). However, **6 per cent of respondents expressed that there is no space where they feel they have exercised their right to participation.**

*"...many young people are still facing political prosecution, including children who have to face legal action from a young age simply because they've come out to fight for what they believe in..."*

*Youth participant*

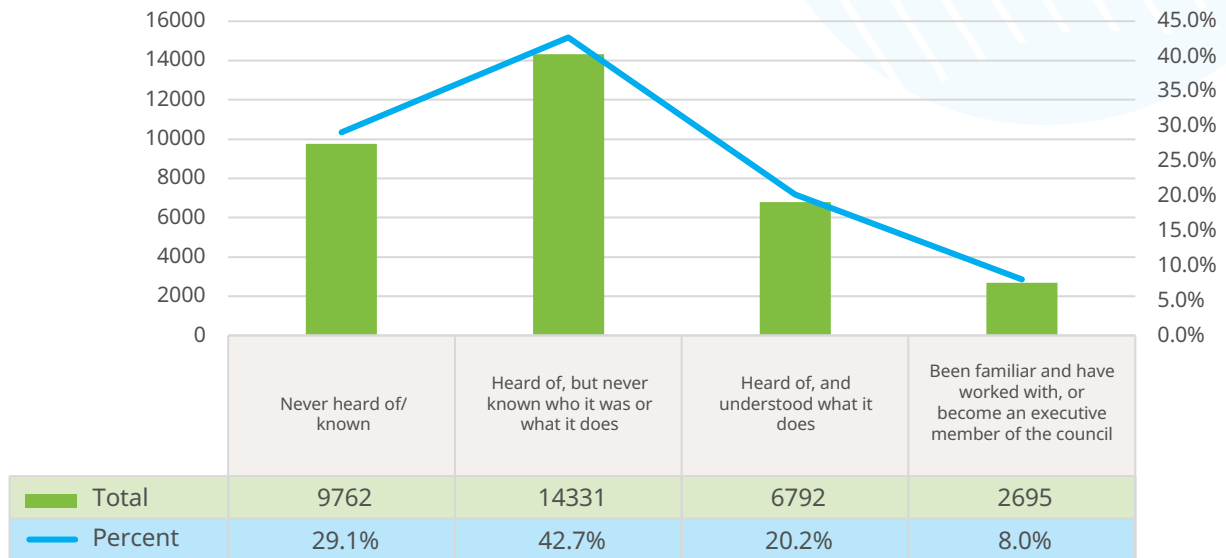
## In which spaces do you feel you have exercised your right to participate?



Regarding areas of formal participation for children and youth, such as the CYCT and school student councils, which serve as crucial platforms for channelling the voices and opinions of children and youth to policymakers and decision makers, **the online survey revealed that the majority of children and youth are not familiar with the CYCT.** Specifically, 29.1 per cent indicated that they were entirely unaware of the CYCT, while 42.7 per cent knew its name but had no understanding of its functions. Only 20.2 per cent were knowledgeable about and understood its operations, while an additional 8 per cent were familiar and had collaborated with the CYCT.

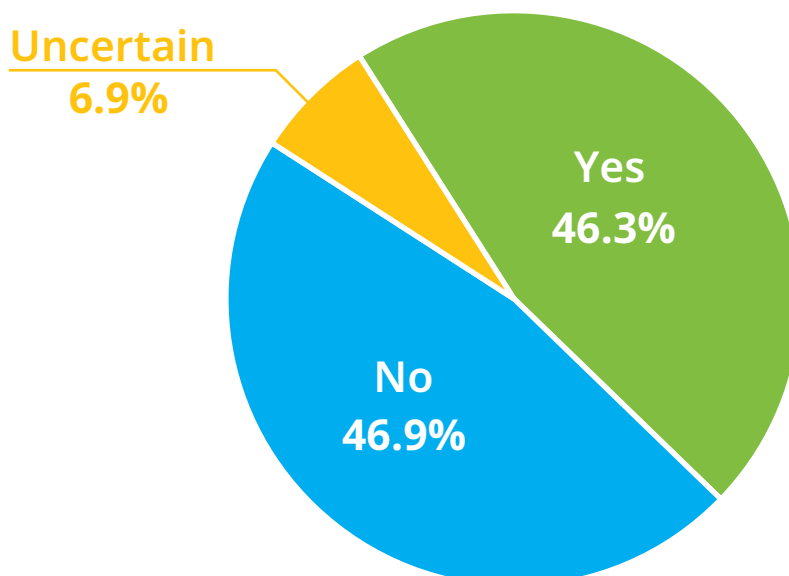


### Are you familiar with the Children and Youth Council?



Concerning student councils, **46.3 per cent of respondents perceived their school council as a space that facilitates engagement among children and young people and effectively highlights issues faced by students to teachers and school administrators.** However, **46.9 per cent did not agree with this assertion**, and 6.9 per cent were uncertain whether it was true. Those who responded negatively or expressed doubt that the student council served as an engagement platform to effectively convey issues to the school viewed the student council primarily as a support space for teachers and schools in their various activities, rather than a forum or a channel for students to voice their concerns. Furthermore, this group of **children and youth felt that schools, administrators and teachers were not genuinely attentive to the voices of students.**

### Does your school student council serve as a space for children and youth to understand engagement and to genuinely reflect students' issues to teachers and school administrators?



The Assembly also identified the need to ensure that children’s participation is properly funded, as shown in the quote below.

*“...we should establish a fund to support children’s activities. Consider the example of Members of Parliament who allocate the revenue from taxing alcohol purchases to manage the organisation...”*

*Youth participant*

Based on these findings, the recommendations formulated by the National Children and Youth Assembly on participation are as follows:

Recommendation	Assembly Resolution
1) Improve access to participation in the CYCT.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To expand the avenues for eligible individuals to directly select representatives for the CYCT, incorporating both a walk-in system at various locations in the area and an online system.</li> <li>2. To enhance accessibility by increasing communication and information channels through various means, including mainstream media, online platforms, and public spaces.</li> <li>3. To select representatives of the CYCT simultaneously at all levels.</li> <li>4. To place the CYCT under legislative authority, supervised by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and with support provided by the Secretariat of the House of Representatives.</li> <li>5. To improve access to information on spaces suitable for organising activities for children, youth, and the public, without incurring costs or at a minimal fee. Details about these available spaces should include information such as location, area size, maximum capacity, and available facilities.</li> </ol>
2) Enhance reporting on children and youth participation.	To request the Royal Thai Government to consistently submit reports on children and youth to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child under the CRC.
3) Amend budget regulations and enhance the participation of children and youth in budget allocation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To have a budget for supporting expenses for child and youth representatives.</li> <li>2. To implement zero-base budgeting (which considers the necessity and worthiness of activities without referring to the previous year’s budget base) to reduce unnecessary expenses each year and allocate the budget more efficiently in line with current objectives.</li> <li>3. Children and youth councils at each level should allow children and youth in the area to participate in selecting issues for budget allocation (participatory budgeting).</li> </ol>

# Conclusions

As shown in this report, children and youth have a wide range of concerns which they wish to see addressed at the national level:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on household income, affecting young people's access to work and educational opportunities and the ability of families to meet educational costs.
- While financial support for education and training is a primary concern, children and youth also want to benefit from school curricula and teaching styles that allow them to develop skills that are relevant to the twenty-first century and current labour market needs.
- The need for safe spaces, whether at home, school, online or in their surrounding environment, is of paramount concern for young people.
- Relatedly, they require more information and support to manage their own health, including access to mental health services, which they see as integral to their well-being.
- Children and youth are aware of the potentially harmful impacts of pollution and environmental degradation on their health and well-being, and demand action to help reduce the risks.
- Lastly, children and youth wish to participate fully in all aspects of decision-making which affect their lives.

This report presents their voices so that, collectively, all sectors can address the challenges faced by children and youth. Nurturing the development of children and youth will bring benefits not only for young people but for Thai society as a whole.



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