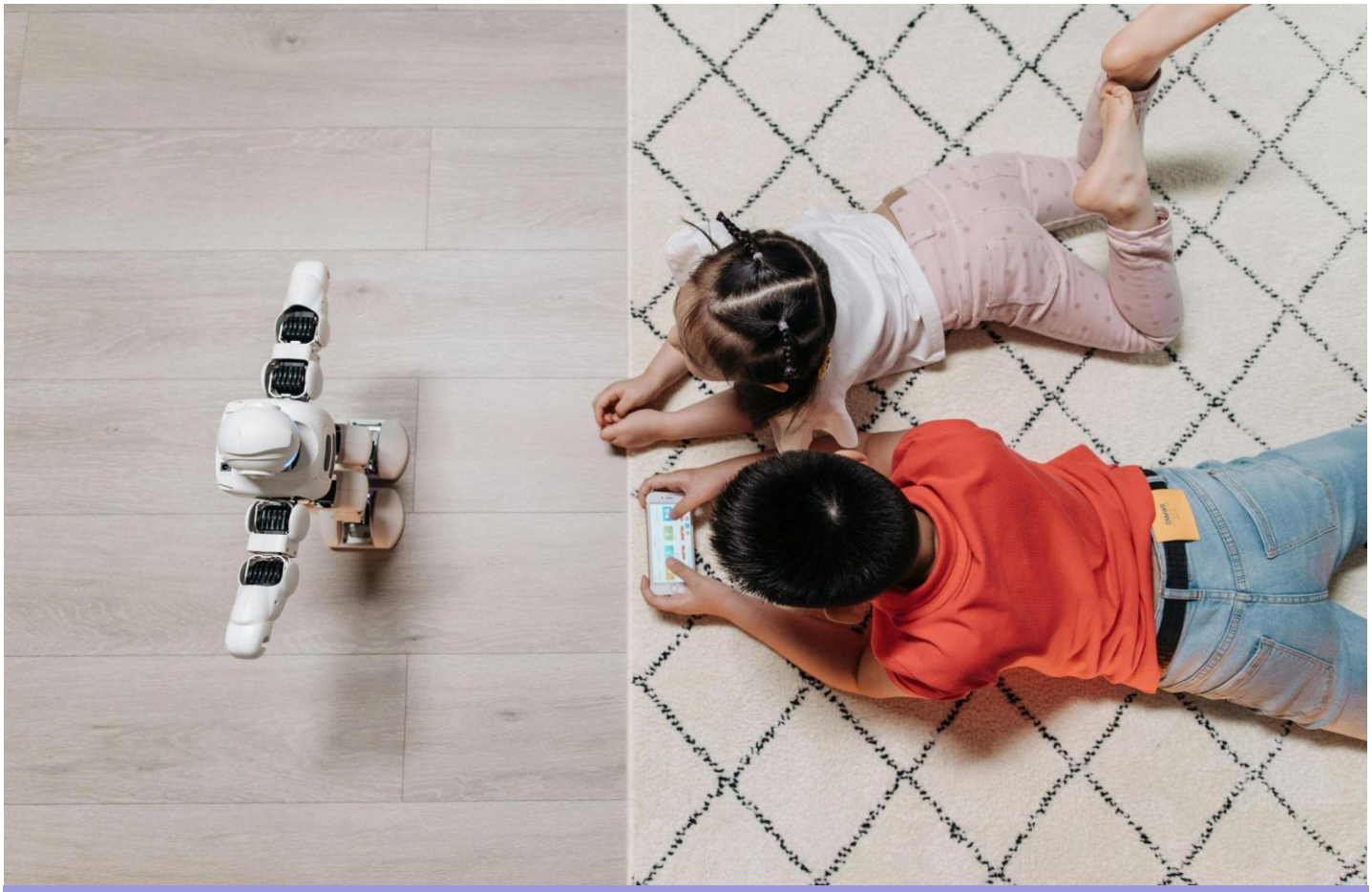

Children's rights in the age of generative AI: Perspectives from the global South

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About this report

This report offers an overview of the research conducted by our country partners as part of the RIGHTS.AI project, coordinated by the Digital Futures for Children centre (DFC). This report – and the four country reports – are intended for policymakers, educators, child rights advocates and technology developers seeking evidence-informed guidance to support safer and more equitable GenAI use for children. For country findings and methodology, see:

Brazil: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/129516/

India: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/129517/

Kenya: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/129518/

Thailand: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/129519/

Methodology and study replication: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/129141

[1] https://eukidsonline.net

Executive summary

Children around the world are increasingly using generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) apps. With a methodology designed in cooperation with the EU Kids Online network and our four global South country partners, this brief **synthesises new research conducted in Brazil, India, Kenya and Thailand** on children's experiences with GenAI, highlighting potential impacts – both positive and negative – on their rights. It adopts **a child rights framework, which asserts that these children's voices and experiences deserve to be heard** by their governments, by policymakers shaping the digital world, and even by the influential AI companies headquartered in the US, as their actions are consequential for **children living in the global South**.

As the findings reveal, children in Brazil, Kenya, India and Thailand encounter both risks and opportunities – and they have lots of recommendations for improvements. The research highlights that they approach GenAI with **curiosity, playfulness and enthusiasm**, yet their experiences often remain **sporadic and superficial**. Awareness of risks typically arises later, either through personal experience or because **adults warn them of potential dangers**.

Children's curiosity and agency could – and should – be more constructively supported by families, educators and communities to ensure that early engagement with GenAI **develops in ways that truly meet their needs**. At present, children are largely **self-taught**, often away from adult oversight, and insufficiently guided by **existing societal resources** – including regulation, education and knowledge communities. The consequences for children's **rights and wellbeing** are therefore **haphazard and suboptimal**.

In the four countries studied, the children's experiences of GenAI were strongly shaped by **inequalities of access, connectivity, cost and digital literacy**. They were also often aware of **linguistic, cultural and racial biases**, as GenAI frequently failed to recognise or respect their circumstances and needs.

Applying the **11 Child Rights by Design principles**[2] provided a **robust framework** for analysing the children's experiences, revealing multiple ways in which GenAI simultaneously **enables and infringes children's rights**. Because GenAI operates opaquely – both at the interface and behind the scenes in commercial data ecosystems – many children likely **underestimate infringements** on their rights to equity, privacy, safety, agency, access to quality information and freedom from commercial exploitation. They are more attuned to the ways society **fails to deploy GenAI** to support rights to education, play, cultural belonging and wellbeing.

Although children have the **right under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to be consulted** about matters that affect them – including the design, development and deployment of GenAI – the children were **often unaware of this right** and of their other rights, and so did not expect consultation. Nonetheless, the country reports reveal a wealth of **creative ideas and thoughtful proposals** from the children for how GenAI could improve their lives.

This matters because children in the global South are already using GenAI – likely to a **greater degree than adults, including policymakers, realise**. They are discussing GenAI among themselves and **formulating hopes and fears** about growing up in a GenAI age. Their experiences deserve **recognition, their needs met and their voices heard**.

Finally, while these reports reflect a **substantial research effort**, they represent only a **small fraction of children's diverse experiences**. With around 15 children interviewed per country, many perspectives remain uncovered, and additional research could yield further insights. Nonetheless, the study addresses a significant gap, given that **most published research on children and GenAI focuses on the global North**, and provides a foundation for future research and policy development in Brazil, Kenya, India and Thailand.

[2] Livingstone & Pothong (2023).

GenAI in children's lives

Children and young people are rapidly coming across GenAI in their everyday lives– at home, in school and through the platforms they already use.[3] From chatbots like ChatGPT and Copilot to AI features embedded in Snapchat, WhatsApp or Google Search, GenAI now powers apps, learning tools and even experimental mental health services.[4] It can answer questions, respond to prompts and generate new content, making it both visible in dedicated apps and invisible in the background of familiar digital environments. Such technological innovation stimulates children's curiosity as well as public concerns.

Emerging evidence suggests that vulnerable, marginalised and younger children may face poorer outcomes, widening the gap between those who benefit from GenAI and those who do not.[5] Although often promoted as a tool to level opportunities, GenAI is showing little sign of closing these divides. Despite rapid adoption, major gaps remain in understanding how GenAI affects children's digital lives, wellbeing and rights – especially given the lack of voices from the global South.[6]

GenAI is advancing faster than regulation, creating new opportunities and risks for children as policymakers struggle to balance innovation with safeguards. Such technological innovation stimulates children's curiosity as well as raising public concerns. As GenAI technologies evolve rapidly, policymakers are scrambling to keep up and find ways to balance innovation with protections.

Recent years have witnessed a growing body of international and regional AI regulations, albeit primarily initiated in the global North, calling for responsible and ethical development and use, alongside an expanding wave of national AI strategies. These are setting the agenda for the responsible and ethical development and use of AI.[7] Yet, developments are slow and very few of these regulations focus on children, even though they are often at the forefront of adopting these technologies.[8]

[3] Vosloo & Aptel (2025).
[4] Atabey et al. (2025).
[5] Aitken et al. (2025); Atabey et al. (2025); Hashem et al. (2025); UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight (2023).
[6] Stoilova et al. (2021).
[7] Council of Europe (2024); Dignum et al. (2021); European Commission (2024); G7 (2023); OECD (2019); UNESCO (2021); WEF (2024); White House (2022, 2023).
[8] 5Rights Foundation (2025); Vosloo & Aptel (2025).

More specifically, in Europe, the EU Act is the first binding regulation, which introduced a risk-based legal framework to govern design, deployment and oversight of AI systems and addresses child rights.[9] The Council of Europe has set out a framework for AI governance for the protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.[10] In the US, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) published the AI Risk Management Framework (RMF).[11] Other key frameworks at international level are the G7 *Hiroshima process*,[12] the OECD AI principles and UNESCO's Ethics of AI,[13] which continue to shape international debates.

These frameworks, while important, reflect the infrastructures, choices and interests of mostly Western countries in policymaking that impact children globally, including children in the global South. As such, global South perspectives should be integral, shaping agendas around equity, diversity and development, and this surely includes children's voices as key stakeholders in the GenAI ecosystem in today's digital world.

This gap in attention to the experiences of children in the global South is mirrored in research. Indeed, most of the published research on children and GenAI focuses on the global North. This absence of global South insights risks reinforcing existing inequities, both in AI policy and development. Children in Brazil, India, Kenya and Thailand are already active GenAI users, often more so than policymakers realise; yet, their realities are mainly absent from international decision-making or AI governance discussions. Structural divides – whether in connectivity, affordability, language inclusion or cultural representation – mean that current policy models fail to address the contexts where most of the world's children live.

Research and methodology

At the DFC we are committed to recognising children's experiences across diverse circumstances, especially in the global South, which is underrepresented in research. Without voices from the global South, international frameworks risk consolidating governance systems that reproduce bias, marginalisation and exploitation, while overlooking opportunities to harness GenAI for equity, creativity and wellbeing. Children's experiences and perspectives from the global South should inform these

[9] European Commission (2024).
[10] Council of Europe (2024).
[11] NIST (2023). For other frameworks on AI governance in the US, see Harris (2025).
[12] G7 (2023).
[13] UNESCO (2021).

debates. This is not only a necessity but also a matter of fairness if GenAI governance is to be inclusive, effective and future-proof.

The study was conducted by our research partners in four global South countries – Brazil, India, Kenya and Thailand – in coordination with the EU Kids Online network. It asked four overarching questions:

1. What are children's experiences with and perceptions of GenAI?
2. What is the potential impact of GenAI on children's rights?
3. What do children want to see in terms of GenAI regulations and protections?
4. What insights are offered by cross-country comparisons?

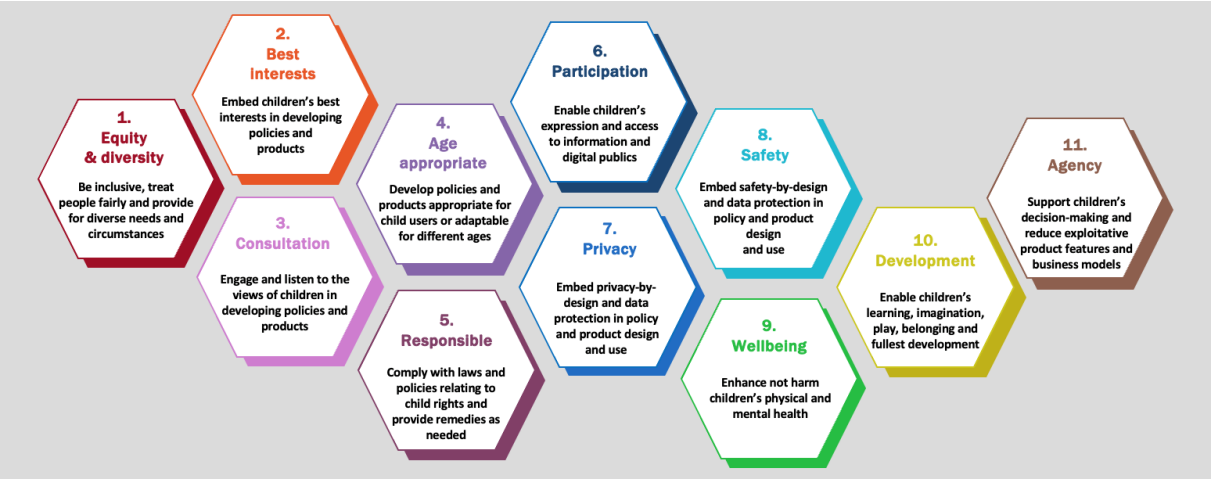
In each country, 15 children aged 13-17 who had at least occasional experience with conversational or visual GenAI tools were purposely recruited to ensure diversity in gender, age, socioeconomic background and GenAI experience. Semi-structured interviews, primarily conducted in person with online options as backup, explored children's experiences across a range of GenAI applications, including standalone tools (e.g., ChatGPT, DALL-E, Jukebox) and integrated features in platforms (e.g., Snapchat, Grammarly, WhatsApp). Interviews lasted around one hour, using showcards, observational prompts and screen demonstrations to capture interaction patterns, skills and reflections.

Ethical approval was granted by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Research Ethics Committee (Ref: 439180), and age-appropriate informed consent was obtained from both the children and their guardians, with safeguards in place to ensure privacy, data security and child protection, in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and local regulations.

Data analysis followed a common coding scheme based on 11 Child Rights by Design principles, grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its *General comment No. 25*.[14] This provides a comprehensive yet practical framework for designing digital products and services that protect, respect and promote children's rights in the digital environment.

[14] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2021); UN General Assembly (1989).

Figure 1: The 11 principles of Child Rights by Design[15]



We note that while the country reports reflect a substantial research effort, they represent only a small fraction of children's diverse experiences. With around 15 children interviewed per country, many perspectives remain uncovered, and additional research methods could yield further insights. We therefore hope that the research provides a valuable foundation for future research and policy development in Brazil, Kenya, India and Thailand. It could also be applicable or adaptable in other countries. To that end, we share full **details of the research methods developed at: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/129141**

Comparative findings, by child rights principle

The research found that the children were already engaging with a mixture of integrated GenAI tools within platforms they already used (e.g., My AI on Snapchat, Gemini on Google and Meta AI on WhatsApp), as well as standalone products (e.g., ChatGPT, Character.AI) in both app and browser versions. Free versions were more widely used, exposing them to poor quality versions as well as extensive data harvesting and potential privacy violations.

Further, the children used GenAI tools for a range of online activities – from learning and writing, entertainment and creativity, to emotional support and friendly advice.

[15] Livingstone & Pothong (2023).

However, not all were equally able to benefit from GenAI or understand the implications of its use.

In what follows, we offer brief snapshots of the detailed and carefully contextualised research findings included in the country reports. These identify key similarities and differences in the children's experiences of GenAI in the four countries. As will become clear, GenAI exerts influence across the full breadth of children's rights, simultaneously creating new opportunities for the realisation of rights while generating risks that may undermine them.

The findings that follow are organised according to the 11 Child Rights by Design principles. Note, however, that human rights are interconnected and indivisible: many of the findings therefore relate to more than one principle. Each is presented in its headline form, followed by a succinct statement of the principle and a note on the most relevant UNCRC Articles.

Equity and diversity

Be inclusive, treat everyone fairly and provide for diverse needs and circumstances.

UNCRC Articles: (2) Non-discrimination, (20) Children unable to live with their family, (21) Adoption, (22) Refugee children, (23) Children with a disability, (25) Review of treatment in care, (30) Children from minority or Indigenous groups.

Without compensatory interventions, GenAI risks widening rather than closing gaps in access, skills and benefits. Children from the global South are particularly disadvantaged by GenAI systems that are predominantly designed and trained on data in the global North, overlooking local contexts, languages and cultural nuances. The children are vocal about their experiences of GenAI bias.

Across Brazil, India, Kenya and Thailand, GenAI use reflects and amplifies structural inequalities in access, GenAI literacy and skills and opportunities. The children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, especially those attending private or well-resourced schools, tended to have better digital infrastructure and critical literacy, and broader awareness of GenAI's possibilities and limitations. In contrast, their peers from rural, low-income or public school contexts often relied on shared devices and free versions of apps with reduced functionality, and received little or no formal guidance.

Language exclusion and lack of cultural diversity were major concerns for the children in India, Kenya and Thailand, who thought their languages and daily life contexts were poorly represented in GenAI outputs. In contrast, the Brazilian children reported fewer

problems and were generally satisfied with Portuguese language results.

Their personal experiences also made the children concerned about the risks these technologies might pose to vulnerable groups, causing more harm than benefit. However, they acknowledged and welcomed the potential of GenAI tools to address the specific needs of children with disabilities or special educational needs.

> ***I think AI could be really cool for someone with hearing loss. (Nelson, 14, Brazil)***
>
> ***It was supposed to be an African child, but we were given a white child in a green shirt. (Girl, 16, Kenya)***
>
> ***Inaccurate or irrelevant answers. This tends to happen with Thai prompts. (Tem, 13, Thailand)***
>
> ***… they don't work in multiple languages so you basically have to write a speech in English and then translate it to Hindi. (Sameer, 15, India)***

Best interests

Children's best interests should be embedded in GenAI product development, design, deployment and policy.

UNCRC Article: (3) Best interests of the child.

Children want GenAI to enhance, not undermine, their learning, self-reliance, resilience and relationships. Yet, they often face difficult trade-offs, and the promised benefits don't always outweigh the potential drawbacks.

The children recognised GenAI's potential to support their best interests in education, also enabling accessibility, creativity and wellbeing. The Brazilian and Thai children valued GenAI's role in bridging educational gaps, particularly for children with disabilities or those in under-resourced schools. The Indian children identified time-saving benefits and creative opportunities, but stressed that such advantages must be balanced against risks to learning quality, cognitive development and employment futures. Concerns also centred on the emotional impact of overreliance, misinformation and inappropriate advice – particularly in health contexts. The Kenyan children were clear that GenAI should *support, not replace,* human thinking and guidance.

> ***It replaces human labour. (Ceci, 15, Kenya)***

> ***We can't always go to ChatGPT and search for answers, or we are going to depend on it forever. (Trisha, 14, India)***

> ***The pros include learning outside the classroom, like with homework. We can ask ChatGPT because in class, we might not hear everything the teacher says. But the cons are that [the answers it provides] might not be accurate or align with the homework or what the teacher assigned. (Toem, 15, Thailand)***

> ***I became a person who avoids work and takes help from it [AI]. But then when the teacher found out, he got angry, and I felt bad. I could have done it myself, but I didn't do it. (Yasar, 17, India)***

Consultation

Children should be meaningfully engaged and listened to in GenAI product development, design, deployment and policy.

UNCRC Article: (12) Respect for the views of the child.

Embedding meaningful child consultation into GenAI policy and product development remains a critical gap in upholding children's rights.

In all four countries, the researchers identified a notable absence of formal mechanisms that enable children to influence the design, governance or regulation of GenAI tools. Despite this, the children consistently expressed enthusiasm about having a say in how GenAI tools were designed and adapted to their needs. They offered creative and practical ideas for improvement, such as 'ChatGPT Kids' or age-specific interfaces, simplified language, inclusion of local cultural references and safety features tailored to younger users. The Kenyan children explicitly called for *paid* youth co-creation, while their Brazilian peers emphasised that developers should adapt GenAI's communication style to match their needs. However, opportunities to share such insights were typically lacking, and no child interviewed could think of an occasion where they had been consulted about GenAI by those with the power to make a change.

> ***Run AI hackathons for students to experiment. (Jules, 17, Kenya)***

> ***I think we need to start with the people. We need to study how people are experiencing the problems … if we have a number of people backing us in saying that the application or AI doesn't work, or that it's inaccurate, then we can raise the problem with the developer. (Ying, 16, Thailand)***

> ***… if I input someone else's image into an AI application, it will say that it's against its policy… Especially if it's compromising images of others, AI wouldn't process it… (Pol, 13, Thailand)***

Age appropriate

GenAI policies and products should be appropriate for child users and adaptable for children of different ages.

UNCRC Articles: (5) Parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities, (18) Parental responsibilities and state assistance.

The children across the four countries recommend age-differentiated modes, adequate safeguards and more culturally sensitive moderation systems. Without these, GenAI's educational and developmental potential is undermined by exposure to content that is irrelevant, inaccessible or harmful to younger users.

The children across all researched country contexts encountered significant challenges related to the age appropriateness of GenAI outputs. The Brazilian, Kenyan and Thai children reported accessing overly complex, adult-oriented or sexualised content without adequate safeguards. The Indian children noted that classroom discussions rarely addressed these risks, leaving them to navigate inappropriate or misleading content without structured guidance. While such exposure occurred both intentionally – through peer misuse of prompts – and unintentionally, due to a model's design, the children wanted GenAI systems to offer intelligent and sufficient safeguards appropriate to their maturity and context.

> ***… it's not age-appropriate. Even for older people, it's not. But for young people to watch it, it's quite dangerous, right? And it gives ideas. I saw 4th graders talking about stuff they shouldn't be. (Tara, 15, India)***

> ***The words used by AI are very difficult for me. It should first ask the person's IQ and then adapt the language. (Marcos, 14, Brazil)***

> ***This was made by an adult … there's no child who would've made this. (Oisa, 16, Kenya)***

> ***… if they [younger children] don't grasp that it's not a human teaching them, would they really learn? Some children won't get it … and see them as toys… Then they won't learn; they'll just play. (Jah, 18, Thailand)***

> ***ChatGPT uses words I don't understand … it should simplify language for kids. (Pinkie, 13, Kenya)***

Responsible

GenAI products and policies should be reviewed to ensure they comply with child rights laws and policies.

UNCRC Articles: (4) Implementation of the Convention, (40) Juvenile justice, (41) Best law possible, (42) Knowledge of rights.

Children want to be in control of their engagement with GenAI. The children are frustrated by the lack of effective regulatory enforcement and transparency from GenAI providers, signalling a gap between their expectations of responsibility and current practice.

The children identified a wide range of actors – developers, governments, educators and parents – who should bear the responsibility for ensuring GenAI was safe, fair and rights-respecting. The Brazilian and Indian children emphasised platform accountability for harms such as misinformation, bias and unsafe content. The Kenyan children viewed responsibility as a matter of both corporate safeguards (e.g., provision of parental controls, prompt refusal) and adult mediation, noting that teachers and parents should be informed about suspicious activity. The Thai children highlighted the need for clear rules not only for how GenAI was developed and used but also how it affected their lives in the long term, and expected companies to follow them. Across all four countries, the children also wanted to have responsibility for their own engagement with GenAI.

> ***There should definitely be a limit to how developed these things get. (Ohm, 15, Thailand)***

> ***Rules would be necessary so as not to let these types of technology strictly under the control of massive corporations. (Paco, 16, Brazil)***

> ***… if the government has also been involved in, say, the regulations of the company or just giving the company the license to do things like these that impact so many different people, then even the, well, even government should be held accountable. (Manisha, 16, India)***

> ***… the ones who are most at guilt are the technological companies… You created this. You knew the flaws it had, but yet you didn't take enough time to fix those flaws. (Mitch, 17, Kenya)***

> ***I think the law can require certification of compliance with copyright law, which already exists. (Nut, 15, Thailand)***

Participation

Enabling children to participate in digital publics.

UNCRC Articles: (13) Freedom of expression, (14) Freedom of thought, belief and religion, (15) Freedom of association, (17) Access to information from the media.

Participation is strongest where children have access to up-to-date tools, supportive learning environments and guidance in both technical and ethical dimensions of GenAI use. More often, however, the children across all four countries are left to devise their own ways of participating, without adult guidance or support.

Children's participation most directly enhances their sense of empowerment and helps build essential skills. However, in the four countries opportunities for active, creative and participatory GenAI use varied by digital access, literacy and school policy. In Brazil and Thailand, digitally confident children used GenAI for creative writing, coding, art and music, while others employed it narrowly for homework completion. The Kenyan and Indian children also described using GenAI to explore personal interests, but uptake was constrained by uneven access to premium features, language barriers and teacher attitudes – some encouraging experimentation, others banning it.

> ***AI can basically do everything. So if you do it, it just feels different. Because you can say you did it because it's your creativity. (Sagar, 14, India)***

> ***I won't tell them that it was the work of GenAI … just tell them that I'm … smart. (Toem, 15, Thailand)***

> ***AI makes me happy because I feel like I can liberate my creativity; it allows me to express ideas that would otherwise be stuck inside of me. (Paco, 16, Brazil)***

> ***I almost use ChatGPT and Canva every day … since I study every day, ChatGPT is, like, my guide. (Blue, 17, Kenya)***

Privacy

Privacy by design should be embedded in policy and product development and use.

UNCRC Article: (16) Right to privacy.

The children's limited understanding of GenAI's data collection, profiling and algorithmic tracking – combined with the lack of transparency in systems that rely on large-scale data harvesting rather than privacy-preserving models – leave them ill-equipped to exercise their privacy rights.

The children valued their privacy, but limited transparency and digital literacy left many believing incorrectly and naively that GenAI did not share their data. While some feared their information could be 'leaked', most trusted the companies developing GenAI tools. The Brazilian and Kenyan children often expressed resignation, treating privacy loss as inevitable in GenAI use. The Indian children admitted to having limited awareness of how their data might be stored or repurposed, although some could articulate hypothetical risks when prompted. The Thai children rarely mentioned privacy without researcher cues, focusing instead on the functional limitations of GenAI. The children had an overall low understanding of data collection, profiling and algorithmic tracking.

> ***Change the privacy policy, so that the system keeps our data private even when we misplaced our trust in GenAI. This way, our data won't be shared widely with others. (Ying, 16, Thailand)***

> ***It starts off by saying 'How are you today?' and then you say something, and then it will ask another question … some hackers or other people can take that information and scam or fraud us. (Govind, 16, India)***

> ***You are talking to a program which might take your information and use it for God-knows-what, you know? Like that retina scanning program. (Oscar, 17, Brazil)***

> ***Our privacy and data isn't really kept. So that means other people are actually viewing our data. (Varisha, 15, Kenya)***

Safety

Safety by design should be embedded in policy and product development and use.

UNCRC Articles: (19) Protection from violence, abuse and neglect, (34) Protection from sexual exploitation, (35) Protection from abduction, sale and trafficking, (37) Protection from inhumane treatment and detention, (38) Recruitment into armed conflict, (39) Recovery from trauma and reintegration.

The children find many gaps in GenAI's safety and proposed technical safeguards

such as password protections, refusal of harmful prompts, stronger content moderation and rapid takedown processes.

While the children saw some risks as unavoidable, they worried that the problems might outweigh the benefits, especially for those who were more vulnerable. Safety risks identified by the children encompassed misinformation, cyberbullying, gender-based violence and the circulation of sexualised deepfakes. The Brazilian and Kenyan children described incidents of manipulated images being shared in school settings. The Indian children expressed concern about false or misleading information in both academic and health contexts, while their Thai peers warned that biases or 'hallucinations' in GenAI outputs could harm children's wellbeing or create barriers to opportunity.

> ***[My friend] talked about dirty topics with some of the [GenAI] characters. Like, sexual things... I think that's pretty lame. (Oscar, 17, Brazil)***
>
> ***... it ... generated a picture of a naked woman online. (Rak, 17, Thailand)***
>
> ***I think there's one thing that should be addressed ... [AI] should be safer, you know? Because it's very easy to access bad stuff. (Veronica, 14, Brazil)***
>
> ***AI tends to exaggerate... I think AI should stop exaggerating symptoms because it puts stress on people. (Jules, 17, Kenya)***
>
> ***I think sometimes it verges on deception, where some people use AI-generated or modified voices to impersonate others and trick people into believing various things. (Nut, 15, Thailand)***

Wellbeing

GenAI policies and products should enhance, not harm, children's mental or physical health and wellbeing.

UNCRC Articles: (6) Life, survival and development, (23) Children with a disability, (24) Health and health services, (26) Social security, (27) Adequate standard of living, (33) Drug abuse.

The children encounter GenAI as both a comforting presence and a potential source of vulnerability and distress. Overall, wellbeing impacts are shaped by the context of use, with risks heightened for vulnerable children and for those who use GenAI as a substitute for other social relationships.

The children in all four countries linked GenAI use to both positive and negative wellbeing outcomes. On the positive side, the Thai children valued access to health and

fitness advice in an accessible language, while the Brazilian and Indian children appreciated GenAI's potential to reduce academic stress through time-saving support. On the negative side, concerns emerged about emotional dependence on chatbots, distress caused by generic or stereotype-reinforcing responses, and the loss of human connection and empathy in sensitive situations. The Kenyan children stressed the irreplaceable value of human interaction for emotional support.

> ***We are good friends... GenAI is beautiful, annoying, but good. And it's there for you; they won't get tired of you. (Varisha, 15, Kenya)***
>
> ***... it will not tell anyone. And until I feel satisfied, I can ask it all the time. And it will keep answering me. And it is not so emotional that it will ask why you are asking this or not. (Nadeem, 17, India)***
>
> ***I saw my friend playing with [Character.AI] so much that sometimes I got annoyed and told them, 'Delete it already! Delete it! Talk to me, I'm right here. Why are you talking to AI? Talk to me!' I think my friend is addicted. (Jah, 18, Thailand)***
>
> ***The bots are not realistic because they are made to say things that you want to hear. (Aditya, 17, India)***
>
> ***... it's a machine that's talking to you as if it were a real person. Still feels a bit weird to me. (Renata, 15, Brazil)***

Development

GenAI policies and products should enable children's learning, imagination, play and belonging.

UNCRC Articles: (28) Right to education, (29) Goals of education, (30) Children from minority or Indigenous groups, (31) Leisure, play and culture.

GenAI tools fail, the children said, to account for their varied developmental stages and capacities. Any developmental benefits of GenAI depend heavily on guided, reflective use that promotes critical thinking, synthesis and creativity. Many of the children do not have the support networks needed to facilitate this reflective use.

While GenAI can support learning, skill building and creativity, overreliance on it can limit children's opportunities to develop critical social skills and emotional intelligence – a risk the children acknowledged and worried about. The Brazilian and Indian children warned

against passive copying of GenAI-generated answers, while the Thai children noted that English language dominance limited their ability to deepen subject knowledge. The Kenyan children highlighted the absence of formal instruction on using GenAI critically, relying instead on peer learning.

> ***If it's not really certain about some information, it should just not give it. (Vishnu, 15, India)***
>
> ***I think it has made me lazier in my thinking... (Imani, 13, Kenya)***
>
> ***... there should be different AI tools that are geared towards different age brackets. (Ester, 16, Brazil)***
>
> ***I don't think robots have the ability to inspire or connect with the students. (Ohm, 15, Thailand)***

Agency

GenAI policies and products should support children's decision-making and reduce exploitative features and business models.

UNCRC Articles: (32) Child labour, (36) Other forms of exploitation.

The children have learned to exercise their agency by setting boundaries with GenAI. They use it to enhance their thinking rather than replace it, while staying mindful of overreliance and actively managing their engagement. Building GenAI literacy – technical, critical and ethical – is essential to strengthening children's agency in navigating and even shaping GenAI systems. Still, the main responsibility remains in the design and regulation of these services to create opportunities that enhance rather than limit children's choices and agency.

Agency in GenAI use varied significantly across the different contexts. In Brazil and India, some children demonstrated active fact-checking and awareness of bias, while others relied on simplified or counterfeit GenAI without recognising its limitations. The Kenyan children, often self-taught, showed adaptability but sought more tools in local languages to express themselves fully. The Thai children leveraged GenAI for both entertainment and learning, but faced linguistic and cultural barriers to maximising its potential.

> ***I see it as a tool, yeah, I am ... I am awestruck by the things that it can do but it remains in awe, it doesn't go ... doesn't go any further than that. So sort of, like, sometimes it's a last resort. Yes exactly... And I would prefer that it remained that way as well. (Manisha, 16, India)***

> ***I would never trust AI for a more complicated, daily-life type of stuff. I'm not certain if the AI has a pre-programmed political bias, or if the programmers have biased political views and might omit certain kinds of information. (Kazuo, 17, Brazil)***

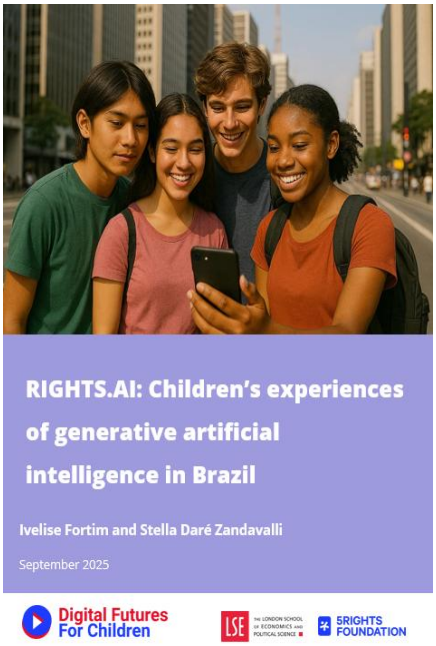
> ***The one I use is free, and it also answers in English … the only thing I don't like about it is that you have to pay. (Carl, 17, Kenya)***

> ***I'm self-taught. I just keep using the applications, and sometimes I have a moment of 'Wow, I didn't know it could do this'. (Kaew, 15, Thailand)***

These findings and the comparative analysis underscore the need for more research to illuminate the positive and negative impacts of GenAI on children and their rights. First, there is a need to expand the evidence base across more global South countries to improve the representativeness of diverse cultural, political and economic settings, and to understand how these factors interplay with GenAI access, children's GenAI experiences and the implications for their rights. Second, it is essential to translate these insights into recommendations for design, policies and regulations for national governments and international AI governance fora. The aim is to use research evidence to advocate for child rights-respecting AI design and governance, while also funnelling children's voices and experiences into design and policy-making processes.

Comparative findings, by country highlights

Brazil



Children in Brazil use GenAI across education, play and social life, often experimenting independently while also learning from their peers, family or school. They emphasise its creative and inclusive potential, but remain most concerned about privacy, misuse and unequal access.

Governance: *Plano Brasileiro de inteligência artificial [PBIA] 2024-2028 (Brazilian artificial intelligence strategy)* and *Brazilian digital transformation strategy* (E-digital)[16]

- GenAI was widely used for schoolwork, creative expression and social interaction, although levels of skill and understanding differed considerably.
- While some of the children displayed technical knowledge, many admitted they knew little about how it worked, although they were eager to learn.
- The children highlighted its inclusive potential, especially for neurodiverse and disabled peers, but also saw gaps in access and support that reinforced inequality.
- The children valued GenAI for expression and participation, yet expressed concern over authorship, authenticity and the fairness of opportunities.
- Key risks included misuse for bullying, manipulation or producing harmful fake content, alongside worries about overreliance undermining learning.
- Privacy concerns were strong among digitally literate children, particularly

[16] Governance source for all countries: UNIDIR's AI Policy Portal, https://aipolicyportal.org and OECD.AI Policy Navigator: https://oecd.ai/en

around data collection and foreign ownership, while others accepted data loss as inevitable.

- The children called for stricter age restrictions, greater accountability from developers and shared responsibility between parents, schools and platforms.

Access the country report on Brazil: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/129516/

India

For Indian children, GenAI is first and foremost a learning tool – used for homework, school projects or tackling difficult concepts – before expanding into leisure and creative experimentation. It is widely seen as inevitable and important, although the children showed limited understanding of its workings and risks.

Governance: *Responsible AI #AIForAll Approach (National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, National strategy on artificial intelligence, India AI: National program on artificial intelligence*[17]

- Most of the children used GenAI to aid their studies, especially for explanations, summaries or spelling and writing style, but also enjoyed its creative possibilities, such as generating images, characters and music.
- The children described using GenAI to 'outsource' routine tasks, freeing time for activities they preferred, although they worried about becoming overly dependent.
- Privileged children tended to display stronger technical knowledge, casually referring to concepts like 'training data' or 'neural networks', while others remained vague.
- Language barriers persisted: English prompts yielded better results than those

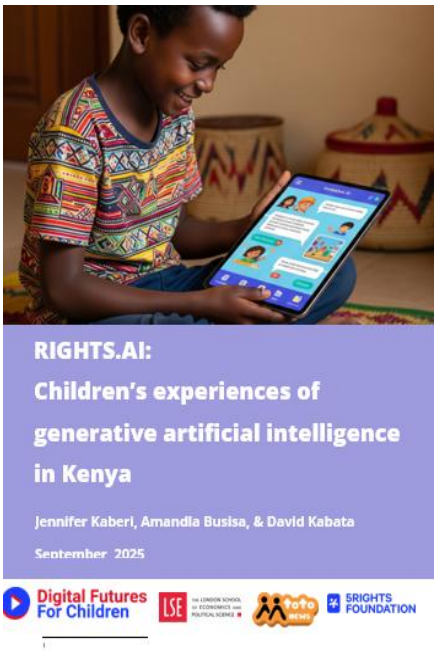
[17] Governance source for all countries: UNIDIR's AI Policy Portal, https://aipolicyportal.org and OECD.AI Policy Navigator: https://oecd.ai/en

in Indian languages, leaving some feeling marginalised.

- The children generally trusted companies to safeguard their data, with limited awareness of privacy or misinformation risks; many saw themselves as 'safe users'.
- GenAI was viewed as supportive of wellbeing and confidence, yet the children noted potential harms such as undermining independence, weakening social-emotional connections or facilitating bullying.
- Adults rarely involve children in debates over AI governance, yet the children themselves called for safety by design features, age-appropriate filters and more equitable access.

Access the country report on India: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/129517/

Kenya



Kenyan children are among the fastest adopters of GenAI, relying on it for schoolwork, creativity and entertainment. However, digital divides in access and skill are stark, and they feel largely excluded from GenAI's design and governance.

Governance: *Kenya national artificial intelligence (AI) strategy 2025-2030* (Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy)[18]

- GenAI was used for learning, creative writing, storytelling and leisure, as well as for personal advice and health information.
- Digital inequalities were clear: children in rural or low-income settings relied on free, basic tools with limited features, while wealthier peers accessed paid, more sophisticated systems.
- With little parental or school guidance, the children were largely self-taught, or

[18] Governance source for all countries: UNIDIR's AI Policy Portal, https://aipolicyportal.org and OECD.AI Policy Navigator: https://oecd.ai/en

through peers, siblings or online tutorials.

- The children were critical of GenAI's racial bias and its failure to reflect African languages, culture and lived experiences.
- Concerns included restricted access to higher-quality paid outputs, misuse for bullying or manipulation through deepfakes and exposure to misinformation.
- While recognising GenAI's supportive role in learning and health, the children worried about overreliance, reduced independent thinking and risks to wellbeing.
- The children wanted technology companies to be held primarily accountable, with stronger safety by design features, but also called for parents and teachers to help them understand both the risks and opportunities of GenAI.

Access the country report on Kenya: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/129518/

Thailand

The Thai children approached GenAI with enthusiasm tempered by pragmatism. They valued its contributions to learning, creativity and problem-solving, but were quick to identify its shortcomings, particularly around language bias, inaccuracy and privacy.

Governance: Draft Thailand *National AI strategy and action plan (2022–2027)*, Digital Thailand: *National AI ethics guideline* (Ministry of Digital Economy and Society)[19]

- GenAI was appreciated for its learning benefits: instant answers, explanations and step-by-step guidance that made difficult concepts more manageable.
- The children also used it for creativity and problem-solving, experimenting

[19] Governance source for all countries: UNIDIR's AI Policy Portal, https://aipolicyportal.org and OECD.AI Policy Navigator: https://oecd.ai/en

with prompts and integrating it into school and extracurricular tasks.

- Many of the children developed practical digital literacies, including strategies to cross-check outputs across different tools or to verify references.
- Inaccuracies and hallucinations were a common frustration, especially when using Thai prompts; English inputs generated more relevant and informative answers.
- Concerns included job displacement, GenAI overdependency and erosion of human connection, although the children remained optimistic about GenAI's potential if better designed.
- Privacy awareness was low, with many misplacing trust in technology companies; yet some children explicitly called for consultation in the development and regulation of GenAI.

Access the country report on Thailand: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/129519/

Next steps for rights-respecting GenAI

Here are some brief recommendations framed at regional and global level, complementing the national-level guidance presented in the country reports. Given the limited sample size – approximately 15 children per country – they are **indicative rather than definitive**, highlighting emerging patterns and insights that connect with established policy directions and the 11 Child Rights by Design principles. They are intended to guide policymakers, educators, families and technology developers in **supporting safer, more inclusive and rights-respecting engagement with GenAI**, while acknowledging that further research and context-specific adaptation is essential.

Policymakers

- **Embed child rights in AI regulation:** Ensure that national and regional AI strategies recognise the specificity of GenAI and explicitly reference children's rights, drawing on the 11 Child Rights by Design principles[20] and UNCRC

[20] Livingstone & Pothong (2023).

guidance.

- **Mandate child consultation:** Create formal mechanisms for children to contribute to GenAI policy, regulation and oversight, recognising their agency and expertise as active users.
- **Enforce safety and privacy standards:** Require developers to implement safety by design and privacy by design measures, including robust content moderation, age-appropriate features and transparency about data collection and use.
- **Support digital literacy and critical engagement:** Fund initiatives to build children's technical, ethical and critical literacy around GenAI, ensuring they can understand and navigate risks.

Educators and schools

- **Integrate GenAI into learning frameworks:** Encourage guided use of GenAI to enhance learning, creativity and problem-solving, while balancing against risks such as overreliance or academic dishonesty.
- **Enhance rather than replace traditional learning:** Promote the use of GenAI as one of many tools, complementing books, teachers and peers, and supporting critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving.
- **Provide age-appropriate instruction:** Tailor GenAI education and activities to children's developmental stages and capacities, including tools in local languages and culturally relevant content.
- **Facilitate ethical and critical discussions:** Enable reflection on bias, misinformation, privacy and authorship, helping children understand both the potential benefits and harms of GenAI.
- **Foster participation and creativity:** Promote experimentation, collaborative projects and student-led exploration of GenAI as part of a broader digital citizenship curriculum.
- **Advocate for inclusion and equity:** Support children in navigating linguistic, cultural and access-related barriers, and encourage engagement with tools that reflect local contexts.

Families and communities

- **Support curiosity and agency:** Encourage safe exploration of GenAI, providing guidance and discussion rather than restriction alone.
- **Monitor and guide usage:** Offer age-appropriate oversight without stifling independent and exploratory learning or creativity, including discussions of privacy, safety and fairness.
- **Co-create rules and boundaries:** Collaborate with children to establish household guidelines for GenAI use, balancing freedom with protection.
- **Promote wellbeing alongside digital engagement:** Encourage responsible and balanced use of GenAI, highlighting the importance of offline relationships, emotional support and physical activity.

Technology developers and platform providers

- **Adopt Child Rights by Design approaches:** Incorporate safety, privacy, inclusivity and accessibility into all GenAI products without sacrificing expression, exploration, sociality, creativity and agency as they are likely to be used by children, even if not originally intended for them.
- **Ensure transparency and accountability:** Clearly communicate data use, limitations, biases and potential harms, and provide mechanisms for children and caregivers to report concerns.
- **Provide age-appropriate features:** Develop differentiated interfaces, simplified language, pop-up privacy warnings and reminders of variable reliability of outputs and other risks, culturally relevant outputs and protective safeguards for children.
- **Facilitate meaningful child consultation:** Engage children in co-design, testing and evaluation of GenAI tools to ensure products respond to their needs and perspectives.
- **Invest in local data curation:** Support local-led institutions, such as universities, cultural archives and linguistic hubs, in collecting and labelling high-quality, contemporary local data to train AI models.
- **Mitigate bias and promote inclusivity:** Address linguistic, racial and cultural biases in models, ensuring outputs reflect diverse populations and lived

experiences.

Researchers and funding bodies

- **Expand the evidence base for the global South:** Prioritise studies in underrepresented regions and jurisdictions to understand diverse children's experiences with GenAI.
- **Investigate developmental impacts:** Examine how GenAI affects learning, creativity, wellbeing and agency across different age groups and contexts.
- **Evaluate products and interventions:** Test the effectiveness of educational, regulatory and technological interventions aimed at improving safety, equity and child rights outcomes, and ensure that GenAI tools are assessed not only for functionality but also for their real-world impact on children's learning, wellbeing and rights.
- **Promote participatory methodologies:** Involve children in the research process as co-researchers or co-designers to capture authentic perspectives and neutralise any power imbalance in agenda-setting and decision-making processes.

Appendix: Country comparisons

	Brazil	India	Kenya	Thailand
Children and young people using the internet, aged 15-24 (India, 16-19)[1]	90%	14%	9%	97%
Children and young people using the internet, aged 15-24 (India, 16-19)[1]	96%	17%	47%	99%
Households with internet access at home[1]	74%	83%	26%	91%
Government AI readiness index (ranking)[2]	66 (36)	63 (46)	44 (93)	66 (35)
Under-five mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)[3]	14.4	27.7	39.9	9.2
Completion rate for children of primary school age[3]	96%	91%	79%	99%
Attendance rate for young people of upper secondary school age[3]	65%	64	36%	70%
Youth literacy rate for 15- to 24-year-olds[3]	99%	92%	88%	98%
Population under 18 (millions)[4]	51.0	436.6	24.6	13.4
Population under 18 as % of total[4]	24%	30%	45%	19%

Sources:

[1] Brazil, Kenya and Thailand data for 2024: https://datahub.itu.int/data; India data: www.medianama.com/2020/05/223-india-internet-users-2

[2] Oxford Insights: https://oxfordinsights.com/ai-readiness/ai-readiness-index

[3] UNICEF country data: https://data.unicef.org/country

[4] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs: https://population.un.org/wpp

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