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Evaluation of Children’s Views on “Home Mood” and “Distance Learning” during the Covid-19 Process on the Basis of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

TURKEY

An Alternative CSO Thematic Report for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

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Related Survey Reports:

[Report of the Survey “Kids, How Are You Doing at Home?”](#)
[Report of the Survey “Kids, How is Distance Learning Going?”](#)

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Introduction

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, schools in Turkey remained closed from 16 March 2020 to 6 September 2021 when face-to-face education was given restart except for some short-term hybrid practices. The Ministry of National Education introduced “voluntary” distance learning in the period March-June 2020 and switched to “compulsory” distance learning in the period September 2020-June 2021. In this period of one and a half year when students were away from their schools, there was also curfew for persons under age 20. Though restrictions were lifted occasionally and curfew varied according to risk situations in provinces, schools remained closed for 15 months.

Hence, the Covid-19 pandemic caused substantial changes in daily life practices of children as well, besides worries, uncertainty and losses it brought along. What children experienced in this period and how they evaluated the process with respect to their social-emotional and academic development is of great importance. As far as it could be followed, neither the Ministry of Family and Social Services responsible for the development of the rights of children nor the Ministry of National Education responsible for education could ensure the participation of children to decisions that directly affected them and there was no process of feedback for their views about these decisions and their implementation.

The Democratic Governance Circle working within the Another School is Possible (BBOM) Association to promote child participation developed two distinct online surveys in May 2020 and January-February 2021 in order to solicit the views of children however limited it had to be.

The present report is based upon data obtained from two separate surveys focusing on the experience of children at primary school ages (age group 6-11) while they were closed in home and continued their education in the form of distance learning. It seeks to convey to the Committee children’s views in their own statements.

While the report targets to support the content of **Article 12** which lays down one of the general principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and **Article 13** as its supplementary, it also includes **Article 2** in general principles, **Articles 28, 29 and 31** under the heading **education, leisure time and cultural activities**, **Articles 16 and 19** under the heading **civil rights and freedoms**, **Article 27** under the heading **basic health and welfare**, and **Article 5** under the heading **family environment and alternative care**.

Overall Situation

The evaluation of practices and services offered to children by the Ministry of Family and Social Services and the Ministry of National Education during the pandemic remain out of the coverage of this report. Nevertheless, evaluation of relevant activities of these ministries is important since the report will convey children’s views about the period in question.

It must be stated firstly that there was no comprehensive data and information sharing by public authorities on children’s life at home and their education following the closure of schools during the pandemic. Despite insistent demands by child rights defenders, the poor performance of authorities in collecting comprehensive, consistent and disaggregated data and/or in sharing collected information transparently with the public was again observed in this specific situation as well.

According to the news feature about the outcomes of the “EBA Monitoring Evaluation Survey” shared by the Ministry of National Education on its website on 21 March 2021¹, the survey was conducted in 12 provinces with a group composed of high school students, teachers in primary, secondary and high schools and parents of students to investigate the appropriateness and efficiency of visual and digital EBA content. Since the original of the survey report is not shared it is not possible to evaluate “positive” outcomes mentioned in the news feature. Since children covered in the survey are limited in terms of both number and age group (the news feature says the number of participants is 1,400 without any information about how many of these participants were children) it is clear that survey outcomes cannot be considered as sufficiently inclusive.

The MoNE had to move ahead by taking quick and flexible decisions and making some arrangements in the process of distance learning. In this context the Ministry developed the site “I have an idea for distance learning!” in order to solicit the opinions users and all relevant parties². There is no information whether the site had some announcements to children or used by them. Neither is there any report on whether there were opinions conveyed to the site or, if there were, how they were evaluated and used.

Given this, it is not possible to say that the MoNE could appropriately conduct child-friendly information building and opinion soliciting processes as two important pillars of child participation during the pandemic.

Another important point with respect to supporting participation is the development and effective use of complaint and feedback mechanisms.

The MoNE Communication Centre (MEBİM) operates as a counselling and complaint line and also works to support Covid-19 pandemic management during the school year 2021-2022. There are comments, observations and impressions that the MEBİM is serving to teachers rather than children. Though necessary for any evaluation based on sound data, MEBİM activity reports could not be found on the internet.

An important mechanism through which children can convey their complaints and feedback is provided by the Ombudsman Institution (KDK). Examining the part related to children in the 2020 report of the Institution we find 2 applications related to lack of access to EBA and 1 application seeking economic support during the Covid-19 pandemic.³ Given that the problem of access to EBA is quite common and that children faced many other problems under given circumstances, this very low number of applications can be explained by the unawareness of children about the existence of such an institution or their mistrust. The report for the year 2021 when epidemic regulations continued and children had to participate more actively to the process of distance learning is not released yet.

¹<http://www.meb.gov.tr/bakan-selcuk-eba-izleme-degerlendirme-arastirmasinin-sonuclarini-paylasti/haber/22833/tr>

² <http://uzaktanegitimebirfikrimvar.meb.gov.tr/>

³ <https://kdkcocuk.gov.tr/kdk-pdf/2020-RAPOR.pdf>

Online Surveys “Kids, How Are You Doing at Home?” and “Kids, How is Distance Learning Going?”

General Information about Surveys

The objective of the survey “**Kids , how are you doing at home?**” is to find out about the “home mood” of children (their feelings, needs and experiences while they had to stay in) in the period following the closure of schools on 16 March 2020 and the introduction of curfew for persons under age 20 on 3 April 2020. An online questionnaire (google form) was designed for the **age group 7-12**. The questionnaire had 10 questions some with yes/no options, multiple choice and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was put to children in the period **4-26 May 2020**.

The survey “**Kids, how is distance learning going?**” is arranged again as online questionnaire (goggle form) to find out about distance learning experience of the **age group 6-10**, to take their opinions on access to and quality of distance learning. The questionnaire had 17 questions some with yes/no options, multiple choice and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was put to children in the period **23 January-7 February 2021**.

Informed consent of both adults and children was taken in both surveys. Besides, an adult information note was shared together with the survey link considering that children can be reached through adults given the characteristics of the age group and that the presence of adults may be needed for literacy support to children.

Questionnaires were firstly announced to teacher groups of the BBOM Association and then to teachers, parents, and relevant adults through e-mail groups and social media asking them to reach their children. The online nature of the questionnaire brought along some limitations. Those who were reached first were children with easy internet access on their part or by their families. Also, factors like the nature of the space where the child fills out the questionnaire and whether he/she is alone while doing it imposed upon surveyors the obligation to keep children and their views safe. While explanations on the survey and consent as well as adult information note served this purpose, the questions in the form were also formulated in a way to consider these factors.

(DEVAM) The main objective in both surveys was to establish a safe contact with children and extract information within limits they wanted to share information rather than obtaining comprehensive information about the subject matter. In order not to obtain personal information beyond what is actually needed, questions were limited in both surveys only to their ages and cities they lived and the type of school (public/private) in the questionnaire related to “Distance Learning.” Hence, data obtained cannot be analysed with respect to such characteristics as gender or socio-economic differences.

Participants to the survey “Home Mood” were 202 children from 18 provinces and participants to the survey “Distance Learning” were 366 children again from 18 provinces.

Findings from the Survey “Kids, How Are You Doing at Home?”

The survey is composed of questions focusing on how children feel, their daily activities, what they like and dislike, things they miss, and their relationship with education at the time. The

findings will be shared under the headings Feelings, Passing Time at Home, Missing School, Contact with Friends and Longing for Freedom also with reference to related rights.

The sub-headings below are presented on the basis of CRC classification used in the format of reports submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and by relating the most relevant classification to rights associated with that classification.

Family environment and alternative care: Improvement of childcare **(Art. 27(4))**

Feelings: Children were asked about their feelings on the day filling out the questionnaire to make them feel safe and connect with the survey. It was observed that their open-ended responses to the question also reflected their overall state in the process. Below are some statements:

- “I feel happy, I play and spend time with my family, my family makes me laugh a lot.”**
- “I feel happy today because children can go out on Wednesday.”**
- “Mixed. It feels weird to be in a situation like this.”**
- “I am bored much for not being in school, I really miss my friends and teachers.”**
- “I am excited. I am excited every day. Though I am sad, I am excited about the day I’ll be able to play with my friends.”**

Most frequently expressed feelings are “happy”, “at ease”, “sad”, “mixed” and “bored.”

Passing time at home: It appears that children spend time on their own or with others at home during the day. Further, children say they enjoy both of these forms of spending time at home. In other words, these two forms are seen not as “mandatory” but the ways they like. In this context, however, there are some points related to the violation of rights:

- Especially acts that children say they are engaged in on their own consist of physical activities. As the pandemic kept children away from their schools and streets, “**action**” is what they miss the most. 40% of children participating to the survey say they don’t have enough space to play and run around. Here are some statements on how children meet their need to be in action:

- “Pretending as if I am swimming since I like it much and climbing up doors”**
- “I am engaged in physical exercises frequently.”**
- “I play ball at home”**
- “I skate at home”**
- “Not being able to go out to the part I made a playground for myself with pillows at home; I mean I used my imagination.”**

*This information suggests that children’s right to engage in play and physical activities and to a standard of living adequate for their physical development, respectively corresponding to **Articles 31 and 27** in the CRC are both violated.*

Violence against the child: Abuse and neglect including physical and psychological recovery and re-integration with society (Art. 19 and 39)

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- While a large majority of 202 children are happy with passing time at home with others 11 do not like this and 6 say they spend no time with others at home. These statements may be indicating that children do not enjoy adequate support while at home and their various rights are neglected or abused.

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- Another point about life at home is that children say they frequently help in household works. It is also of concern that domestic labour which is known to have become more common during the pandemic is stated early, at the outset of the pandemic. Nevertheless, the large majority of children state they like to help in household routines. As to 48 children out of 202 who state dislike for such routines, it seems that they regard it as an obligation.

*One of the most negative state of affairs during the pandemic is that there is no adult present at home to follow children's experiences. The cases of home-based neglect, oppression or violence that teachers in schools could follow in spite of many shortcomings could be no more spotted as schools are closed. This means the absence of monitoring and intervention in cases that violate **Article 19**.*

Education, leisure time and cultural activities: With due account of the quality of education, objectives of education (Art. 29), leisure time, play, having good time, cultural and artistic activities (Art. 31) 5

Missing School: Of 202 children participating to the survey 185 said they missed their school: This outcome becomes more important considering that the school is not only a space for education but also an environment for socialization and acting independently of family (autonomy) especially for this age group.

In the second month of the pandemic:

- 102 children (50% of respondents) say they don't follow courses on the internet or television,
- 74 children (36% of respondents and 74% of those who follow courses) say they find it difficult to follow courses,
- 33 children (only 16% of respondents) say they keep contact with their teachers.

*The low rates of access and contact with teachers and high rate of facing difficulty indicate that means of distance learning are not easily accessible and/or it is difficult for children to focus on education and learn with these means. Being associated directly with the violation of **Article 29**, these facts were examined more thoroughly in the survey "Distance Learning".*

Contact with Friends: While staying at home, an important factor for the social-emotional development of children is their lessened opportunities of contact and socialization with their friends-peers. Of 202 children taking part in the survey 92 say they frequently communicate with their friends while 68 have no such contact at all. It is considered that this outcome derives from the fact that children in the age group targeted by the survey have no communication devices of their own and they are dependent to their adult caregivers in this respect. For more than half of children in the survey, relations with friends they used to be together in their schools or outdoor spaces (yards, parks, etc.) have either lessened or completely stopped. In a simple generalization, it can be said that this situation represents an important state of deprivation in terms of their social-emotional development. Indeed, children say they miss acts like **"playing, hanging around with, talking face-to-face, hugging."** The statement made by a child outlines the situation:

"I used to meet my friends, but unfortunately this does not take place any more. We used to play outside, but now we can't. And it is a pity that our social activities are restricted."

*It is the violation of **CRC Articles 31 and 27** that children's outdoor presence was simply restricted instead of providing them safe spaces where they could meet. Curfews covering children must be discussed in the context of the "best interest of the child" in **CRC Article 3** which is one of the fundamental principles of the Convention. Further, considering the limited*

nature of the space of their own given the dependence of the age group to adults, beings away from friends can be construed as a limitation to autonomy in the context of CRC Article 16.

Longing for Freedom: When children and adults have to stay closed in a house, one of the rights that is under the risk of violation is related to private space and autonomy. Besides constraints on opportunities of spending time with friends, it is also important whether children have their own space and time at home. Children’s autonomy while at home is tried to be assessed by referring to two distinct indicators:

- 190 out of 202 children say they have space for studying at home,
- 167 children say they can be alone if they want to.

This information suggests that adults too have their time for their needs and the state of children having their space and time can be considered as a factor contributing to domestic peace at home.

However, it appears that the greatest longing of children is to be able to spend time out of home, alone or with their friends. The statements below concerning what they miss the most clearly indicate the state of deprivation of freedom caused by being away from school, their friends and outdoor spaces during the early phases of the pandemic.

“Running around in open spaces”

“Play and run around as much as I like to”

“Playing free outside”

“Cruising around freely”

“I want to be free”

“Going around at ease”

“GOING OUT

GETTING RID OF CORONA”

An outcome of the survey worth attention is that children, without exception, could not sufficiently satisfy their needs for **connection, movement** and **autonomy** in this process. Statements by children show that these needs are actually interlinked. For example, “playing ball” is, for a child, not only a response to the need of being active, but also autonomy since it is beyond the authority boundaries of adults and connection too since it means being together with other children.

It is observed that these needs make up an important part of adequate standard of living envisaged by the CRC Article 27 when children are concerned. It also shows the wide-scope of the right to play as expressed in Article 31. The fact that decisions on such matters as going out/staying in, opening/closing schools that are related to the life of children are taken without consulting to their views is a violation of Articles 27 and 31 in addition to Article 12.

Findings from the Survey “Kids, How is Distance Learning Going?”

Survey questions were formulated so as to take the views of children about the working of the process with respect to children’s access to distance learning, quality of education that they have access to and their social-emotional development. Data and associated rights will be discussed under these three headings. Firstly, there will be an assessment of the question “satisfaction” which turns out as the summary of overall outcomes of the survey with children’s quite wide-ranging and open-ended responses. Since this survey is on distance learning, the heading is “Education, leisure time and cultural activities” which is the most relevant one on

the basis of CRC classification used in the format of reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Education, leisure time and cultural activities

Satisfaction with Distance Learning: 64% of children participating to the survey responded “No” to the question whether they were satisfied with distance learning process. 16% were not “sure about it”. Hence, the ratio of children satisfied with distance learning remained as 20%.

- Half of children expressing their satisfaction with distance learning (36 children) have this opinion because they think it is safer given the Covid-19 pandemic.

“I am afraid of coronavirus.”

“I can’t see my teacher and my friends, but I am also worried to bring the virus to my family.”

“I want so much to go to school, but I am quite worried because of Covid-19 and I prefer to stay home since I am not so well.”

- Besides children who find distance learning comforting for avoiding getting tired, using bus service and not having to wear a mask in addition to its safety, there are also others who regard it as an opportunity under given circumstances.

“Because I have not broken away from education and I don’t want to.”

“Schools are closed because of the pandemic, so distance learning will be good for us.”

“Continuing with courses and seeing others whom I like so much makes me happy even at a distance.”

“At least I don’t fall behind in my courses.”

- Children state that they are not satisfied with distance learning due to difficulties they face in access to education and their complaints about the quality of education. But the highest rate of dissatisfaction with distance learning is associated with missing school. Over 1/3 of children (134 children) say they are troubled for missing their schools. The statements below indicate the importance of school for children as a space for learning and development.

“I miss my school, school mates and my teacher.”

“Because I miss real breaks and classes.”

“My friends are not with me.”

““I want to play with my friends. I want to give a hug to my teacher.”

“I learn more in school and I am much closer to my teacher.”

“My schoolmates, my teacher and education, all remain in the background.”

“I want to see everyone in real, it must be face-to-face.”

- Another reason for the dissatisfaction of children with distance learning is related to its physical circumstances and boring nature.

“Distance learning has its difficulties.”

“Our whole life is now upside down, we are frustrated.”

“Because it is much more annoying and that’s all.”

“My eyes are getting awfully tired.”

“It is too tiresome to look at the screen for 6 hours.”

“Who wants to sit in front of a screen for 6 hours.”

“For me it is not fun as in school. It is more fun to have your lessons at the school to play with your friends. It is much better to have it face-to-face with your teacher.”

“It is boring, no going to the blackboard, they turn our voices off, I cannot play with my friends in breaks.”

- To sum up, 75% of children are not satisfied with distance learning due to several reasons including problems in access, low quality of education, problematic nature of the process of learning and most important of all for missing their schools (as a whole with its space, learning processes and relations). Of children who are satisfied, 1/3 say they are satisfied because they find distance learning safe given the pandemic circumstances. Indeed, 84% of 359 children responding to the survey question “How should education go?” express their wishes to return back to face-to-face education in earliest opportunity possible.

Considering children’s responses concerning their satisfaction with their preferred form of education and their views about the process, it can be said that the preference for distance learning instead of face-to-face brings about a potential for violation of rights in many different areas and at levels. As a general evaluation it can be said that the decision for distance learning led to the subordination of many other rights including in education in order to safeguard the right to health. Given the integrated nature of rights, it is problematic to prioritize one right above others. What is more important, there is no information on which rights of children are protected or violated since there is no collection of meaningful and transparent data about the process. There is need for evaluating how children experience this process and where the preference for distance learning stands with respect to the best interest of the child and for comprehensive studies on how this preference affects children.

The fields where the rights of children are violated according to the views of children will be stated in more specific terms under the following 3 headings:

Access to Education: The following data were reached through questions assessing children’s access to live classes in distance learning:

- Of children taking part in the survey (366 children);
 - * 1/6 (54 children) have no internet connection at home,
 - * 217 use smart phone to follow their courses,
 - * 134 use **only** smart phone to connect to courses;
 - * 100 out of these 134 children say phones they use are not theirs.
 - * 87% of children state they regularly attend their classes while 78% state they have friends who have never attended live classes.
- One in every 3 child says he/she is troubled in giving attention to courses. Of these children, 77% say the “room where they attend their class is quiet and free of noise.” This shows that quiet environment alone is not sufficient for children to concentrate in distance learning and there are some other factors including equipment they use in connecting, flow of courses and physical tiredness. Indeed, children mostly use smart phones to connect to their classes which means that they are exposed to smart phone screen for 6 hours a day. This means that children are forced to a device which is much more difficult to use in learning compared to computer or tablet.

Statements made by children support these assessments:

“It can’t be like face-to-face education; plus there are problems in internet connection.”

“I can’t understand like I could at school; the internet gives me stress.”

“Because children cannot understand well. Some children do not take part in distance learning.”

“Courses of my elder sister and brother overlap in some cases and we miss some courses since we don’t have adequate technology at home.”

“There is NO computer, we have to read it as 3 persons and our hours are diverse.”

*This information clearly shows that Article 28 on equal opportunities is violated. Since demographic data was kept limited in the survey, it is not possible to make assessments with respect to economic status, gender or disability. Nevertheless, besides what their statements point out, given children’s state of having to access to education through means that they do not possess in their age group, it is possible to say that there is violation of **Article 2** that prohibits discrimination as one of the fundamental principles of the convention.*

- Class hours of 48% of children covered by the survey coincide with their outdoor time. In other words, 52% of children can go out after their class sessions while 48% cannot do so.

*The fact that children’s right to be out is limited and their courses continue during this limited period of time is a situation that makes it difficult to provide for their “action, connection and autonomy” needs that are even more pressing during the pandemic besides violating **Articles 27 and 31** both.*

Quality of Education: The following is the data reached through questions on how live classes are conducted and whether it supports the learning of children:

- Of children
 - * 88% (322 children) say they learn new things in their classes;
 - * 52% (191 children) say they can freely speak up any time during their classes,
 - * 30% (114 children) say they find it difficult to ask their teachers about issues they could not understand in their classes,
 - * 39% (142 children) say occasionally they may ask their teachers or do not ask at all when they are troubled in doing their homework.

Receiving support from the teacher to express oneself is an important part of the process of learning. Evaluating this fact with children’s opinions given below it is possible to say that learning is interrupted for some children in distance learning.

“It is because we are distracted.”

“I UNDERSTAND NOTHING.”

“Looking at the screen all the time tires my eyes off. And I don’t understand much of courses I am taking.”

- It is known that teachers’ organization of games and other actions in class is supportive of active learning particularly in these age groups. It seems that adding games and action in courses in distance learning is something related to both the skills of the teacher and intensity of curriculum. Of children participating to the survey 132 say their teachers include games in their classes “all the time” while 125 say the same for events involving some action. With respect to grades, it is observed that both games and action are reduced as grades progress from grade 1 to 4.
- In distance learning rest breaks are important in both renewing attention and meet the need for action. 163 children say breaks between classes are not sufficiently long to take some rest while 187 are in opinion that breaks are long enough. It can be concluded that nearly a half of children do not consider breaks long enough.

*Producing curriculum, content and tools suitable to distance learning and supporting teachers in their use of these “new” content and tools is a must to give the process of learning higher quality for all children. This is the only way to realize **Article 29** about the quality of education.*

Despite its limited coverage, the survey tells the quality of education is not sufficiently improved. Still, there is no sufficient data to assert that Article 29 is violated. In this regard, the MoNE must conduct a comprehensive survey to collect data, suggestions and opinions for possible new processes of distance learning by consulting to children, teachers and field experts.

Support by an Adult with Care Responsibility: There are opinions as well as observations that adults responsible for child care were or had to be actively involved in the learning process especially in the case of primary education and more specifically with students in grade 1. This point is analysed in the survey with two distinct statements.

- Of children, 77% say they are troubled in doing their homework and seek support from others at home while about 20% say they face this difficulty time to time. These figures suggest that children get support from others at home rather than teachers in doing their homework.
- The statement “I don’t understand my courses without the help of others at home” was marked with “It is always so” by 52 children and with “never” by 158 children. 52 corresponds to 14% of all participants and this means that the flow of courses and teacher support fall short needs in learning process.

*Both statements support the views and observations that school has moved to home with the pandemic and adults at home now assume the role of teacher more than ever. The survey, however, did not include questions designed to solicit the views of children about this increased role of adults they are living with.. In this new situation, it is necessary to investigate whether the teaching role of adults goes beyond parental direction and guidance as envisaged by **Article 5** and whether it brings along the risk of abuse and maltreatment mentioned in **Article 19**.*

Learning Process Supports Social and Emotional Development: The following are data on children’s possibilities of socializing with their teachers and friends and whether the process of learning takes place in safe and participatory ways for them:

- The most basic need of children as confirmed by the “Home Mood” survey is to be in contact with their teachers and friends. It is disputable to what extent efforts are made in distance learning to respond to such needs as talking with teachers, meeting with friends and playing, all in the context of socialization.
Of children;
 - 76% say they communicate with their teachers out of live sessions too,
 - 46% say their teachers give them time to chat with their friends.

These findings show that ¾ of children are at least in minimum contact with their teachers while more than half of them cannot find the opportunity to chat with their classmates with whom they spend 6 class hours every day. This situation suggests that circumstances in distance learning are not sufficient for socialization, that children lack means necessary for communication, and that the process is managed without paying much attention to emotional needs. The explanation may be that teachers overlook or do not know how to provide a space for socialization as well as the failure of the ministry in giving effect to necessary changes and arrangements in curriculum.

Since distance learning environment can offer only limited opportunities for socialization with friends and for contact with teachers with their critical role in out-of-home support, it can be concluded that there are problems with respect to UN CRC Article 6 envisaging support to the survival and development of the child and Article 27 about adequate standard of living.

- In relation to participation to class processes;

- * 71% of children say they do not behave shy in expressing themselves in live classes,
- * 92% of children (339 children) say they are informed by their teachers when there is any change in their curriculum,
- * 35% say they have a class agreement for distance learning,
- * 58% say they make decisions collectively in many issues.

All statements given above are directly recalled to Articles 12 and 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These statements do not indicate the presence of a safe environment for participation in classes. Given that the Ministry provides no specific support to child participation in distance learning, the position of teachers in supporting the realization of this right becomes even more critical. Here it must be underlined that a more realistic and inclusive assessment relating to class participation of children is possible only by including data obtained through qualitative methods in the analysis.

- In relation to whether they regard the learning process as safe;
 - * 37 children say there are classmates who “talk and behave badly” to them during live classes,
 - * 179 children say there are things saddening for them during live classes and there are adults to whom they can talk about it,
 - * 69% of children say there are guidance teachers in their schools; but only 39% of these children say they can talk to their guidance teachers any time they want to.

This information too is directly related to Article 19 in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which is about protecting children from all forms of maltreatment, neglect, abuse and violence. It is found that one in each 10 participating children is exposed to cyberbullying and that only half of children have access to adult support when needed. Consequently, it is important that the State takes various measures relating to the rights of children in digital environments in line with the latest General Comment no. 25. Then same situation also adds to the importance of children’s access to their teachers and support by guidance teachers/school psychological consultants.

SUGGESTIONS

In line with the findings of two surveys we conducted to make the voice of children heard in the Covid-19 process, the following suggestions are presented in order to support the well-being of children and realize their rights.

- In situations of crisis as in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important to be prepared in advance and to take relevant measures by considering the best interest of the child to avoid any obstacle to the realization of their rights.
- Since the Covid-19 pandemic is still going on, it is of critical importance to collect update, comprehensive and transparent data on the state of children and to develop integrated child protection policies on the basis of these data both to respond to actual needs and be prepared for possible crises in future.
- The MoNE must plan for a comprehensive study or a feedback process on distance education and collect data, suggestions and opinions for possible distance learning processes by taking assessments from children, teachers and experts.
- There is urgent need for a system through which children can state their views on new practices and policies that affect their education any daily routines and their views must be taken seriously.

- Negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on children's social-emotional development and mental health must be examined and accessible, inclusive and quality psychosocial support mechanisms covering all children must be rapidly established.
- Keeping in mind that new education avenues like distance learning and hybrid learning are also a part of formal education system like face-/to-face education, these facilities must be made accessible to all children and processes must be planned by considering the needs of children.
- There is need for arrangements to increase child participation to face-to-face or distant learning. The MoNE must immediately start strengthening teachers and developing various child participation mechanisms and instruments by cooperating with CSOs and experts working in this field.
- The important role of schools in child protection became apparent once more in the Covid-19 pandemic. It is quite important to enhance the capacity of schools to ensure the prevention and reporting of cases such as neglect, abuse and bullying.