

Supplementary report 2013



**NGO Network for
the Rights of the Child**

Children's voices from A to UN

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A report to the UN compiled by children

The document in your possession is a report addressed to the UN Child Rights Committee compiled by children with whom the Network of the Rights of the Child has met. This Report presents the views of Swedish children relating to what they would like to change in order for their rights to be realised in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹

Sweden signed the CRC in 1990 and, since that date, the UN Child Rights Committee in Geneva has monitored the extent to which Sweden adheres to this Convention. Every five years the Swedish Government must report on what plan of action has been drawn up to ensure compliance with the Articles of the CRC. In addition to the Government's Report, individual organisations are invited to submit so-called supplementary reports which give a wider perspective of the extent to which the Convention is followed in Sweden. The Network of the Right of the Child², consisting of 44 various organisations³, focuses on the compliance with the rights of children in Sweden and has previously submitted two Supplementary reports, in 2004 and in 2008. It is essential that the UN Child Rights Committee and the Swedish Government are aware of the concerns of children themselves in relation to their rights. It is the children who are experts on Swedish social conditions relevant to children under the age of 18. The Network therefore annually arranges a minister Hearing in which high-ranking decision makers are invited, together with children from the Networks' member organisations. This allows an opportunity for the children to ask questions and to inform the decision makers of social issues they would like to change. Documentation stemming from these hearings becomes part of the foundation on which this Report is built. Approximately 700 children⁴ have contributed to this report with their opinions and points of view.

In order to more efficiently portray the views and opinions of children, and particularly those children who are rarely targets of attention, the Network has received funding from the General Inheritance Fund to finance a three-year project called "Children's Voices from A to UN". This project allows the Network to seek out respectful and efficient methods to

¹ Hereinafter called the CRC

² Hereinafter called the Network

³ See the List of Members below.

⁴ Contributors to this report were between the ages of 9–18 years.

reach segments of the child population facing greater hurdles in respect to the influence they have over their daily lives. This can be due to age or different background, an insufficient knowledge of the language, due to psychological or physical handicaps or as a result of living under poor social or economic conditions. By focusing on emphasising the opinions of children experienced in the fields where Sweden has been criticised for not fully complying with the CRC, we are hopeful that we can contribute with valuable supplementary reports which can be useful tools in efforts to improve the welfare of children in Sweden.

Background, Presentation and Layout of report

The Report is based on documentation issued after the ministerial Hearings which the Network arranged in the years 2008-2012, as well as from workshops carried out under the auspices of the project “Childrens’ voices from A to UN” in 2012. No additional information has been included in the report after that date when the Swedish Government forwarded their report to the UN Child Rights Committee. However, three different reference groups have been established, one in Bankeryd, one in Tynnered and one in Östersund, in which children between the ages of 9-17 have participated.

The reference groups have analysed the documentation and chosen those questions and quotations on which special emphasis should be placed. They have also set out the lines of thought and recommendations surrounding certain subjects which have frequently surfaced.

The report is divided into the topics found on the Child Ombudsman’s webpage⁵. These topics cover all the CRC Articles and are presented in an easily understood way. All the Articles are presented even if we have not received views and opinions on all topics. The Convention text is from the simplified version found on the Human Rights Education Associates webpage⁶.

Texts in *italics* are quotes taken directly from children.

⁵ <http://www.barnombudsmannen.se/for-barn-och-unga/om-barnkonventionen>

⁶ <http://www.hrea.org/feature-events/simplified-crc.html>

Network of the Right of the Child

Member organisations

Adoptionscentrum

Barns rätt till lek – *International Association for the Child's Right to Play*

Riksförbundet BRIS – *Barnens rätt i samhället*

Bryggan Riksorganisation

ECPAT Sweden – *End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes*

ENSAC Sweden – *European Network for Schoolage Childcare*

Erikshjälpen

Equmenia

FaCo – *Familjevårdens Centralorganisation*

FHDBF – *Föreningen för hörselskadade och döva barn med familjer*

Friends

Frälsningsarméns ungdomsförbund

FUB – *Riksförbundet för utvecklingsstörda barn, ungdomar och vuxna*

Föreningen för Januz Korczaks levande arv

Föreningen Globträdet

HARO – *Riksorganisationen för Valfrihet, Jämställdhet och Föräldraskap*

Hjärtebarnsföreningen

ICDP Sweden, *International Child Development Programmes, Sweden*

Majblommans Riksförbund, *The Mayflower Charity Foundation for Children*

Makalösa föräldrar

NOBAB – *nordisk förening för sjuka barns behov*

Nykterhetsrörelsens scoutförbund

Nätverket för Hela Barn i Sverige

PLAN Sverige

RBU – *Riksförbundet för Rörelsehindrade Barn och Ungdomar*

Riksförbundet Hem och Skola

Riksföreningen för Barnsjuksköterskor

Riksföreningen för Skolsköterskor

RUS – *Riksförbundet Ungdom för Social Hälsa*

Rädda Barnen
Rädda Barnens Ungdomsförbund
Röda Korsets Ungdomsförbund
Salt – *Barn & Unga i EFS (Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen)*
Sensus
SOS Barnbyar
Svenska Irankommittén
Svenska Kyrkan
Svenska Kyrkans Unga
Svenska OMEP – *Organisation Mondial pour l'Éducation
Précolaire*
Svenska Scoutrådet
Sveriges Dövas Ungdomsförbund
Sveriges Kristna Råd
SKR – *Sveriges Kvinno- och Tjejjourers Riksförbund*
Synskadades Riksförbund
Unga Örnars Riksförbund
UNICEF Sverige – *FN:s barnfond*
Verdandi

About the CRC

These Articles deal with the ways in which countries shall work with the CRC.

1. Definition of the child. Every human being below 18 years unless adulthood is attained earlier according to the law applicable to the child.
4. Implementation of rights The obligation on the State to ensure that the rights in the Convention are implemented.
41. Rights of the child in other instruments.
42. Dissemination of the Convention. The state's duty to make the convention known to adults and children.

The UN recommends:

The UN Child Rights Committee has made the following recommendations for these above mentioned Articles:

- To recognise and incorporate the CRC into Swedish Law.
- To improve collaboration of efforts on behalf of children to facilitate the improvement of cooperation between children, parents, organisations as well as central and local authorities.
- That the Child Ombudsman shall be an independent body with local offices throughout Sweden to where individual complaints can be forwarded.
- To ensure that all children and youth are informed of their rights. This includes people working with children: e.g. judges, lawyers, police, teachers, social workers and hospital staff who should all be given training and insight into the rights of children.

Children's Voices

Throughout the last five years' hearings when children and youth have put forward the most significant and relevant questions to high-ranking ministers, it has become apparent that only scant information concerning the CRC has been given at their schools. In those cases when pupils have received

"Hello UN! You are doing a super job with everything but you should ask children more often what they think and feel. Perhaps things would change for the better. ☺ I hope you read this! Bye /happy anonymous girl"



some information, this has mostly taken the form of a ‘theme’ day. *“This should apply all the time in everything we do, not merely appear once on a specific day”*, as one pupil expressed it. *“I know a little about my rights but nothing about what to do if my rights are denied to me”*, said another. *“The Child Convention should be adhered to but there is no money for such issues. I think it is a disgrace and a lie”*.

It has become apparent that time and money must be spent to make children aware of their rights and which authorities to contact if these rights are violated. It is also important that all adults holding jobs involving children are aware of the CRC and its contents. *“One ought to carry out a child consequence analysis at each leisure centre, municipality, government etc. for every decision made concerning children”* said a group hearing participant.

“I feel it is good that we have these regulations. But there are many parents who know little or nothing about them. Let the adults know the facts!”

“Legalise the CRC! NOW!”

The Network of the Right of the Child is dedicated to the issue of legalising the CRC. We follow with great expectations the government’s survey which will analyse the advantages and disadvantages of making the CRC a Swedish Law.

The right to a family

These Articles of the CRC deal with the right to a family.

5. Parents, family, community rights and responsibilities. States are to respect the parents and family in their child rearing function.
9. Non-separation from parents. The right of the child to retain contact with his parents in cases of separation. If separation is the result of detention, imprisonment or death the State shall provide the information to the child or parents about the whereabouts of the missing family member.
10. Family reunification. Requests to leave or enter country for family reunification shall be dealt with in a human manner. A child has the right to maintain regular contacts with both parents when these live in different States.
11. Illicit transfer and non-return of children. The State

shall combat child kidnapping by a partner or third party.

- 18. Parental responsibility. Both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing of the child and assistance shall be given to them in the performance of the parental responsibilities.
- 20. Alternative care for children in the absence of parents. The entitlement of the child to alternative care with national laws and the obligation on the State to pay due regard to continuity in the child's religious, cultural, linguistic or ethnic background in the provision of alternative care.
- 21. Adoption. States are to ensure that only authorised bodies carry out adoption. Inter-country adoption may be considered if national solutions have been exhausted.

The UN recommends

The UN Child Rights Committee recommends that Sweden:

- Deals with the causes that result in so many children being placed in “family-homes” or institutions.
- Carefully control the conditions inside these institutions and family-homes and ensure the existence of independent complaint mechanisms for those children in care.
- Support children who leave institutionalised care.
- Give extra support to children who experience domestic violence, e.g. by improving methods of detecting these cases at an early date, provide special educational efforts for parents in a risk zone, ensure that victims of violence have access to counselling and recovery plus ensure that BRIS (Children's Rights in Society) keeps its lines open 24 hours a day.

Children's voices

Would like to see more of their parents

“I hardly ever see my mother. She works every day between 8-21. That is far too long. I usually phone and ask when she is coming home and she either does not answer or I have to wait too long. And once she is home she sits in

front of her computer all the time and does not even look up from the key board”.

“I am also by myself a lot ... I sit in my room and wait”.

“My parents are teachers so they do not work more than from 8 – 16 in school but even when they come home they bring work with them and are busy until midnight. I feel that they are occupied all the time”.

“Sometimes we have no food in the house and I have to take my own money and go to the food shop or I go to my grandmother’s house which is a long way away.”

“It is a pity because in Sweden it feels as though it is either/or and nothing in between. Many parents work far too much and then there are parents who do not work enough for various reasons. It should be more in the middle and that one can share it out and help each other so that everyone meets their parents for a while every day”.

“I miss spending time with my parents”.

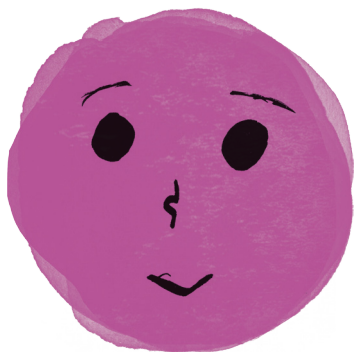
“I think there should be more treatment facilities as I had a mother who used drugs but did not get help. My friend has a mother with the same problem and sought help but was not admitted to a facility as there were no vacancies. It improves a child’s life tremendously. I am living proof of that! /12 years.”

Children of sick parents

A group of children frequently overlooked are those children living with sick parents. These children should be targeted and should receive better help. It ought to be relatively simple to find out if there are children living with adults who are receiving care and assistance. It is often the case that children look after their parents instead of their parents looking after them. It is a heavy burden for a child and causes a great deal of anxiety and stress. As a consequence, these children point out that there should be a better protective and support mechanism for children who assume greater responsibility when parents are suffering from physical or physic ailments, e.g. through economic compensation, by a live-in assistant, psychological aid or assistance.

Children of parents under arrest and in prison

Approximately 30,000 children in Sweden have a parent under arrest or in jail. The organisation Bryggan (The Bridge) has activities and support groups for these children. A wishful thinking list would have the following proposed improvements:



- The general public ought to be more aware of the situation faced by children of confined parents.
- The government needs greater awareness of the needs of these children.
- The media ought to be better at highlighting the situation of these children and there is a need for more opinion-shaping to allow the voice of these children to be heard.
- All decisions made on issues concerning children and their incarcerated parents must always be made with the best interests of these children in mind.
- The justice system ought to be more child-friendly. What is best for the welfare of the child shall always be the first consideration.
- The police ought to have a clearly defined child-perspective when they arrest parents.
- Ensure that the family can make contact with the arrested/jailed person. Pay special attention to the needs of the younger children.
- Give advice and support to parents and legal guardians to enable them to support the children through a difficult time.
- Support the incarcerated in their parental role.
- Support organisations whose activities include helping children undergoing a difficult time.
- Help schools to support children in any way deemed necessary when a parent is confined.

Right to an identity

The following Articles of the CRC deal with the right to an identity

7. Name and nationality. The right, from birth, to a name, to acquire a nationality and to know and be cared for by his or her parents.
8. Preservation of identity. The obligation of the State to assist the child in reestablishing identity if this has been illegally withdrawn.

Right to influence

The following Articles of the CRC deal with the right to participate and to influence.

- 12. Expression of opinion. The right of the child to express his or her opinion and to have this taken into consideration.
- 13. Freedom of expression and information. The right to seek, receive and impart information in various forms, including art, print, writing.
- 14. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion. States are to respect the rights and duties of parents to provide direction to the child in the exercise of this right in accordance with the child's evolving capacities.
- 15. Freedom of association. The child's right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.

UN recommends

The UN recommends Sweden to:

- Continue to uphold and facilitate, among other ways by legislation, respect for the views of children relating to issues concerning them.
- Ensure that adults working with children receive training to enable them to give children the opportunity to express their views and that these views are taken seriously.
- Ensure that all municipalities fulfil the demands of active child participation and that, on a regular basis, they investigate the extent to which the views of children views impact relevant political arenas.

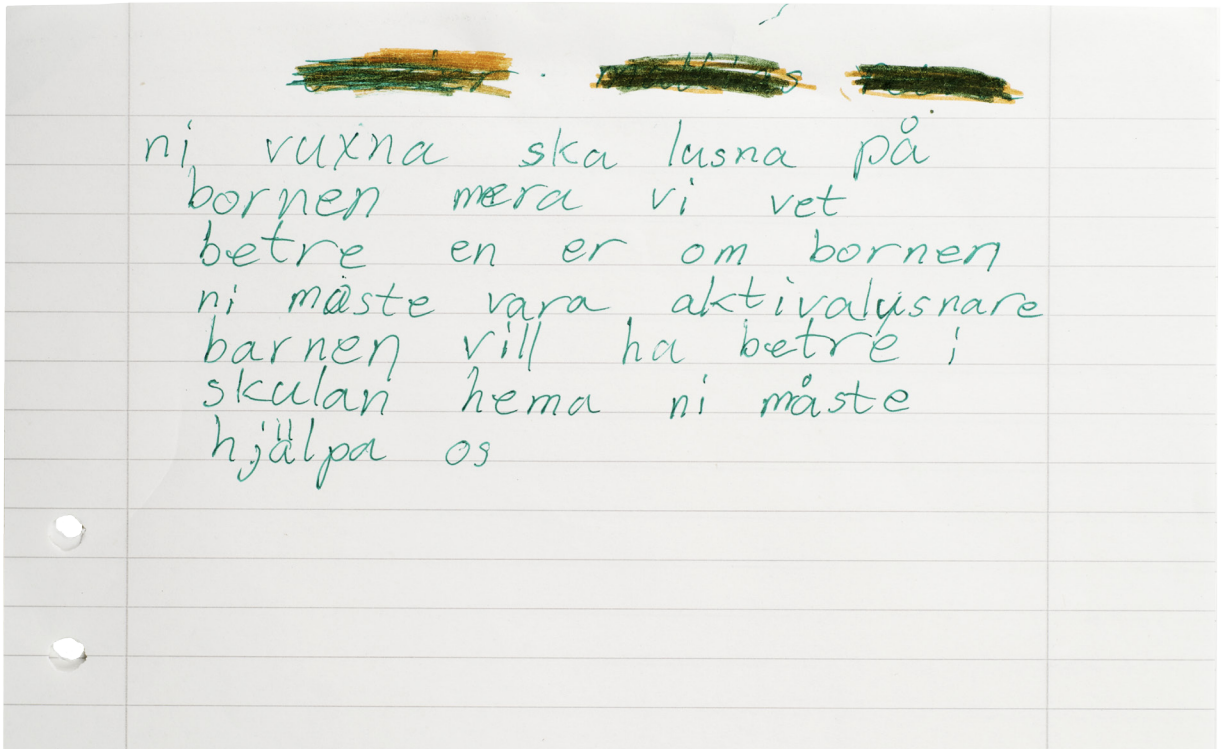
“I live in an area where the playground is going to be redesigned but it is ONLY the adults who have decided how it will be changed and they won't even be there ☹️”



Children's voices

To be taken seriously

The right to be heard and taken seriously is one of the issues that was most frequently discussed at the Hearings and workshops arranged by The Network of the Right of the Child.



“You adults should listen more to children. We know better than you about kids. You must be active listeners when children want to have it better at school and at home. You must help us.”

Children constantly talk about adult nonchalance towards children, they listen a short while but then do not react. A few examples are given below:

The right to vote at the age of 16

A number of the older children we have met wanted the right to vote at the age of 16. Here is a letter addressed to the Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt:

“Hello Fredrik Reinfeldt

It is vital that you politicians listen to the voice of children. The present laws pertaining to the right to vote were changed 37 years ago and it is no longer relevant in today’s society to retain laws which oppress children.

Surely we youngsters have the right to be heard?

We are the present and the future; ,it cannot be right that we have no decision-making rights over our future? Many sceptics maintain, as is evident from findings of annual surveys, that youngsters are often influenced by their parents. Many conclude from these findings that 16 year olds do not have the mental maturity necessary to live in an adult society. However, according to Swedish law, those over 15 years of age can legally be punished and then we

“I think that adults at school ought to listen more when something happens, as mostly they listen for a little while and then put the matter to one side. Or adults generally ought to be more social...”



Hej FM 😊
 Jag är en tjej på elva år
 och jag tycker att man
 inte ska rösta på vilka
 som ska vara med i
 elevrådet. ~~för det kanske~~
 för jag har alltid viljat
 vara med men aldrig
 fått ~~en~~ tillräckligt många
 röster och jag blir
 jätte ledsen när jag
 inte får några röster
 Det är alltid de populära
 som får vara med 😞

“Hallo UN! I am a eleven year old girl and I do not think that voting for members of the student council is a good idea as I have always wanted to be a member but I have never had sufficient kids voting for me and I become really sad when I don't get enough votes. It is always the popular kids who are voted in.”

are considered capable of taking responsibility over our own actions yet we are still not considered sufficiently clever to be able to vote?

Young people do not enjoy being ignored, treated abruptly and squashed by adult society. We enjoy being involved, to be given the opportunity to influence and to make our voices heard. The foundation of a democratic society is that everyone holds the right to have their voice heard, notwithstanding their age, gender, background, sexual preference or political views.

THE YOUNG ALSO HOLD VIEWS!”

Freedom of religious worship

Article 14 has caused several children to point out the importance of not having a religion foisted upon them if they are placed in a family-home. A child living under those circumstances ought to always be told if the family practices any special religion or culture. ***“Children themselves must be permitted to choose which religion they want to practise. A social worker should discuss this with the family concerned to ensure that they do not try to foist their religious beliefs on the child”.***

Pupil democracy

Most schools in Sweden have various types of student council which allow students to have some influence over their school days. However these councils vary tremendously from school to school. Furthermore, it is not obligatory to have a student council, a fact which has been criticised by children attending the hearings. It is felt that there exists indifference and a lack of interest on the part of teachers to support and construct a working student council. As a consequence, students have no influence over their daily school lives and schools miss the opportunity to make many good decisions and to enjoy a positive involvement. The children wanted to see good examples of student council which really work, which would enable schools to be a mutual inspiration for this type of activity. It was pointed out that a decision from a higher authority should be taken so that pupil influence becomes mandatory.

The right to information

This Article in the CRC deals with your right to be kept informed.

17. Access to information and media. The child shall have access to information from a diversity of sources; due attention shall be paid to minorities and guidelines to protect children from harmful material shall be encouraged.

The right to play, leisure time, culture and repose

This Article in the CRC deals with your right to be active during your spare time.

31. Play and recreation. The right of the child to play, recreational activities and to participate in cultural and artistic life.

Children's voices

There exist three main aspects relating to the right to leisure time, play and rest which children have pointed out: time, cost and communications.

Many children feel that school work consumes a good deal of their leisure time and little time remains for rest and various activities. *“Leisure activities consume a great deal of time but this also applies to school. Considerable homework and late school days can mean that there is little energy left for leisure activities which, long term, can lead to poor school results.”*

“I think that help with homework is an extremely good idea, a short study time after school is incredibly important. If there are problems at home, more energy can be expended there instead of on homework and lessons. If a school offers the opportunity to study, it is possible to separate expended energy.”

Children living in rural areas had a lot to say about the lack

of public transport – that busses run so infrequently that it creates an obstacle to being included in leisure time activities or to meeting with friends.

Many children are critical of the high costs. Leisure time activities are frequently expensive and a decision regarding choice of activities becomes a question of social class. *“If the State invested more money in children’s activities the result would be greater opportunities for children and the same conditions for everyone.”*

“Child Allowances should be increased for one parent, low-income families. This would bypass the considerable economic differences between children.”

Some of the children raised the gender aspect: group peer pressure can prevent some children from choosing the activity they enjoy: *“However, in Umeå there is a group of boys who dance ballet, if a few have the courage to start, others will follow”.*

The question of the importance of feeling secure and welcome during leisure activities was also raised. *“It should not be necessary to immediately shine. Allowance must be made to learn, based on each and everyone’s basic qualifications. There is room for improvement on the part of school sports”.*

“If a child does not have an opportunity to participate in leisure time activities, the consequences can be partly that a child lacking the same opportunities can feel like an outsider which could lead to bullying and loneliness. Furthermore a child deprived of leisure activities can be tempted to mix with bad company and acquire bad habits such as alcohol, etc. In addition, the lack of leisure activities can lead to a deterioration of school work and concentration problems which in turn leads to poor grades. If a child is not allowed to join in leisure activities it can in turn lead to health problems if they are always sitting at home. Activities motivate school work.”

In light of the above, the children recommend the following:

Government:

- Support study assistance at all schools.
- Train all school staff in the constructive criticism of prevailing norms.
- Additional funding to municipalities for leisure activities. Be adamant that funding is spent appropriately.



Municipalities:

- Offer economic support for equipment loaned-out to participants of the various activities.
- Fewer lessons or provide study help in school.
- Ensure that all premises used for leisure activities are available to everyone.
- Convert museums into child-friendly spaces.
- Insist that activities shall give everyone an equal opportunity – otherwise contributions will be withdrawn.

Activities:

- Open them for both girls and boys
- Make an effort to welcome everyone
- Make the activities open and secure
- Adapt the levels to allow everyone to develop and to be given the opportunity to succeed.

Equal worth of everyone

These Articles of the CRC deal with the issue of equal worth of each and every child.

2. Non-discrimination. All rights must be granted to each child without exception. The State must protect the child without exception. The State must protect the child against all forms of discrimination.
23. Disabled children. The right to benefit from special care and education for a fuller life in society.
30. Children of minorities and indigenous children. The right of the child belonging to a minority or indigenous group to enjoy his or her culture, to practise his or her own language.

UN recommendations

The UN recommendation to Sweden is:

- Oversee and ensure that Article 2 is fully complied with, particular with reference to hostility towards foreigners and racist attitudes towards children be-

longing to ethnic minorities, refugee children and children belonging to immigrant families.

- Strengthen measures to ensure that children with physical disabilities are given their full rights, e.g. by ensuring their access to an appropriate school.

Children's voices

Physical disabilities

During a workshop with Synskadade Riksförbunds' (Visually Impaired Association) child and youth council, the participants worked around the areas and themes which have been prioritised by the Swedish Government within the framework of their policy for functional disabilities, health, education, travel, accessibility, security, culture (TV, newspapers and sports), internet, courts of law and the police. Below is a summary of their conclusions:

- There exists a high level of ignorance within society on the needs of persons with vision-impairment, not the least at railway stations and airports
- That everywhere within a society there are projecting objects at head-level which cause an obstruction
- Uncertainty during travel and experience difficulties with orientation. A person suffering from vision-impairment has problems reading signs in indistinct colours
- Street signs and public transport are not well adapted to the needs of those with a vision impairment
- Accessibility on the internet is not the best, e.g. countless pages for aids such as "jaws". Home pages are frequently very messy and jumbled
- Aids at schools frequently arrive after a long delay, which means that some children with vision impairment lag behind in their school work, or even fall far behind.

During the hearings, the following views were raised concerning functional disabilities:

"If a person has vision impairment and wishes to go to the movies or watch a film on TV, it is not possible to watch foreign films as it is impossible to read the sub-titles. Why is there no adaption so that ear-phones are provided with a voice read over?"

"I feel that mentally handicapped children are entitled to more support and a better environment to improve the quality of their life. And that all children should learn more about a handicap, so that they understand it better and the reasons for it, as some children are ostracized because of their handicap and I would like to change that!"



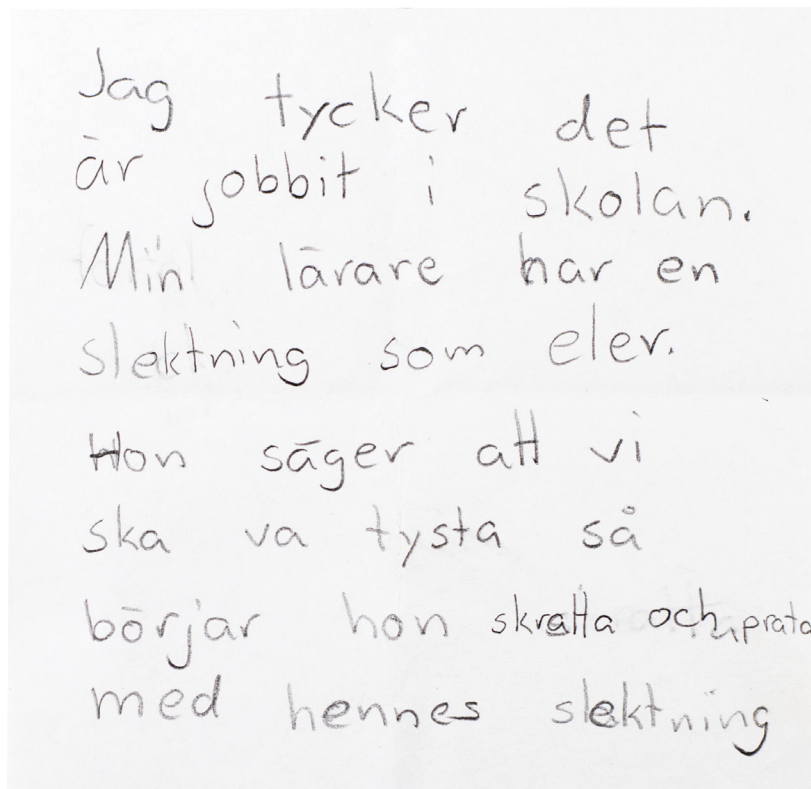
“All places used by children should be adapted for handicapped children so that we can all be together. The handicapped ought to go to the same schools as us, with staff to meet their specific needs.”

“I think it would be great if all hearing schools in Sweden taught sign language, at least the basics, to enable us to converse with the deaf”.

Teachers who discriminate against pupils

“It is the noisy kids that the teacher listens to and who are chosen to do things by the teachers, the silent ones have no power. For example, an aggressive child demanding and receiving a lot of attention while a quiet pupil can have the same problem. Frequently the chatterbox has a better relationship with teachers”.

Why do teachers have to be nasty to their pupils and say ‘shut up! You can never be quiet!’ and then be so extremely pleasant and cute with us when another teacher enters the room?



“I think it is confusing at school. My teacher has a relative as her pupil. She tells us to be quiet and then she starts to laugh and talk with her relative”.

LÖSNINGAR:

~~Alla elever~~ Alla elever, oavsett bakgrund ska få delta samtidigt på idrotten.

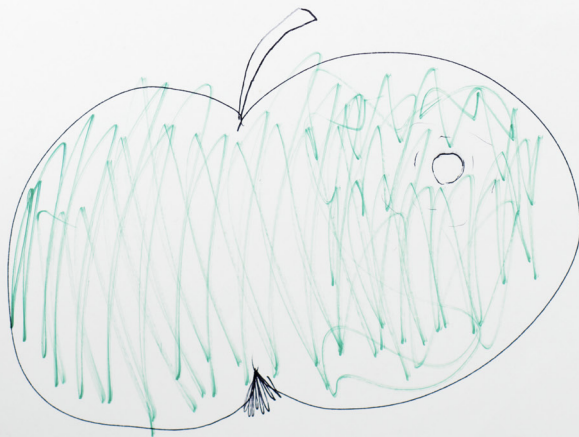
Ge lärare normkritisk utbildning och börja undervisa om det i tidig ålder.

Lärare ska ha större respekt för alla elever.

Mer utbildning om religion och andra kulturer.

Lärare ska ha mer förståelse för yngre de ska lyssna mer på alla elever.

Mer resurser till lärarutbildningen.



Solutions:

- All pupils, whatever their background, shall participate at the same time in sporting activities.
- All teachers go through norm critic training and commence teaching on the subject at an early age
- Teachers shall show greater respect for ALL pupils
- Additional training on religion and other cultures
- Teachers shall have a greater confidence in youth and listen attentively to all pupils
- Additional funding for teacher training

Bullying

The issue which occupied the thoughts of most of the children and youth when preparing this report is bullying. In an attempt to understand what bullying really is, we came up with several words such as **“Discrimination, physical abuse, disturbing the peace, sexual advances, freezing out and unlawful threats”**. The following is a summary of the discussions held by different groups on the subject of bullying.

“Hello, I am 12 years of age and am tired of bullying. I am bullied and I am sick of it. I have been too scared to go to school. DO SOMETHING!”



Causes of bullying:

- Low self-esteem, concede to group peer pressure
- Children living under difficult circumstances repress others
- Teachers afraid to take sides, or they feel that pupils can sort things out themselves
- Teachers have a insufficient knowledge of what to do and do not shoulder responsibility
- Prejudice exists and too little is spoken of prejudice and values in schools
- Not enough teachers and supervisors outside during breaks
- Schools do not have sufficient resources to fight bullying
- Classes do not have many joint activities – such as field trips.

Consequences of bullying:

- It becomes difficult to trust anyone
- A bullied pupil is isolated, becomes introvert
- A feeling that there is no-one to talk to and feeling bad psychologically
- Self-injury behaviour
- Lowered self-esteem and self-confidence
- Do not want to go to school, experience difficulties in fulfilling the school curriculum which can result in unemployment and poverty

Recommendations to the Swedish government and the School Board

- Concentrate on teacher training. Teach norm critic and on governing and promotion techniques.
- Provide teacher internet training so that they can keep up to date with occasions when pupils can be seen digitally
- Introduce ‘life-experience’ in the teacher training programme to allow for discussions on values which can create secure groups.
- More and good teachers. More schoolmasters.
- More funds to schools.

- State-run schools
- Introduce a law to reduce the numbers of students in each class.

Recommendations to school management:

- Ensure the proper working of the student council and/or mentor system
- A plan of action shall be available to counter-act bullying
- Friends, or similar organisations, should have a greater impact on schools. It is important to have a knowledgeable adult supporting a Friends group.
- Concentrate on competence development for teachers.
- More discussions on the CRC create Child Rights Councils in schools.
- Decrease the number of students in each class.
- Make available an anonymous bullying form on the internet where individual cases can be reported in.
- Establish guidelines for the use of mobile telephones and internet.

Recommendations to teachers:

- It is essential that 'temporary teachers' are aware of the above
- More teachers outside during breaks.
- Important that teachers realise their responsibility towards bullying as soon as they see it happen.
- Allow children to participate in finding solutions to bullying.
- Keep eye-contact with pupils.
- Arrange more field trips and class activities.
- Give more time to pupil support. Take your pupils seriously.
- Work towards clarification of 'equal treatment' plan and the CRC.
- Discuss bullying and values and prejudices.
- Get to know your pupils, be more personal and enjoy your class!

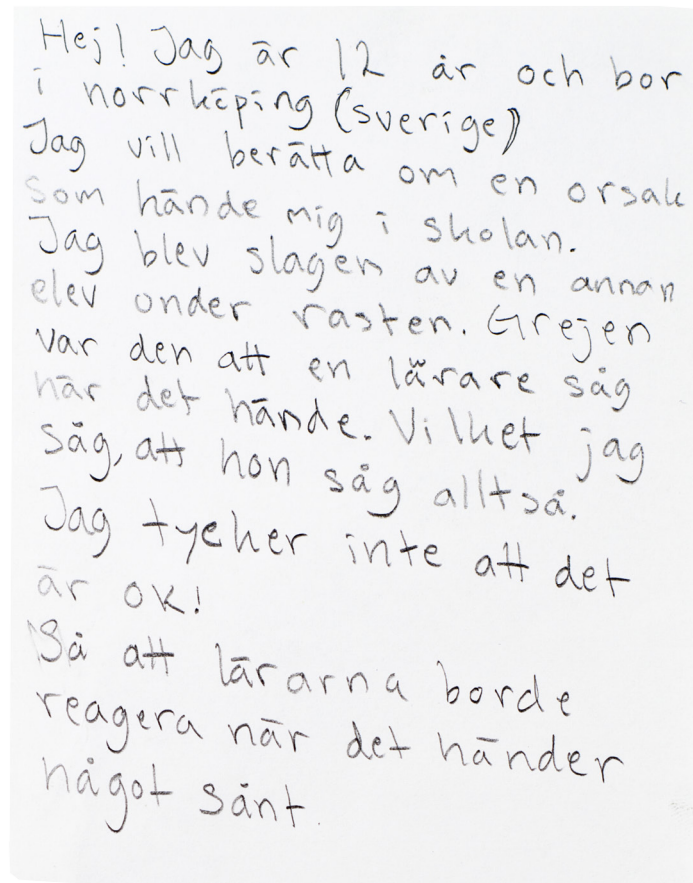
Recommendations to parents:

26

- Pay more attention to your children.
- Ensure that everything you do for your child/children is for his/her best.

Recommendations to pupils:

- Be supportive of your classmates.
- Check how the classmate support system is made up so that it is not only the most popular but the most suitable pupils who are chosen
- Do not impose roles upon each other
- Important to have the courage to turn to adults for support in the case of bullying.



Hej! Jag är 12 år och bor i Norrköping (Sverige)
Jag vill berätta om en orsak som hände mig i skolan.
Jag blev slagen av en annan elev under rasten. Grejen var den att en lärare såg när det hände. Vilket jag såg, att hon såg alltså.
Jag tycker inte att det är OK!
Så att lärarna borde reagera när det händer något sånt.

“Hello! I am a 12 years and live in Norrköping (Sweden). I would like to tell you about something that happened to me in school. I was hit by another pupil during a break. The thing is that one of the teachers saw what happened. I saw that she saw what happened. I don’t think that is OK! A teacher should react when something like that happens.”

“There ought to be a better relationship between teachers and their pupils. This would help the teachers to realise when a pupil is not well and can come to his/her assistance before it is too late.”

“We would like to learn to know our mentors and to feel a confidence towards them.”

“Too often the role of classmate supporter goes to the class bullies. It is obvious that this does not work. But what can we do?”

“Sometimes I dare not go to school when I have a stomach ache and am scared.”

“Teachers do not realise when the situation becomes serious. Sometimes they just shrug their shoulders and say it happened after school hours.”

“Sometimes teachers think that a pupil is exaggerating or just messing around... And the next time something happens, it is not often that a pupil will dare to say anything.”

“Talking to a teacher about bullying can be wrong. He or she can blow up the situation into a big deal and not keep the confidentiality a pupil thought existed.”

“Pupil numbers in classes are too large and the teacher cannot see the individual.”

“At my school there is a gossip page on Facebook where imaginary gossip is put out about different kids. I had friends who were not well during this period, everyone was really scared of being ridiculed and exposed.”

Mera pengar till skolan

Lärarna hjälpa till mer!

Mera
lärare!!!

Mer koll i
bamba om maten.

Mer fadder värksam

Mer rast vakter!

Barnen
❤️

Inge m

Mer majstrar!

Mobba inte

Elev-stöd

Prata mer om barnkonventionen

Mer om li

Insatta vikarier!

Lär

Barnen bestämmer!

Br:



omhet.

mobbing!!!



för, Kom, had m.m

^{mer}
Klassresa!



Mera utflykter!!!

Ögonkontakt
med eleverna

ka behandlingar.

ka Känna varandra mer

B F-råd

“At our dream school the pupils have influence. We have a joint sports class – currently all pupils are separated and pupils from other countries are put together in the same class. This is understandable on occasions but pupils should be in the same class when possible, e.g. sports. We all learn so much from each other when we can mix across cultural borders. Swedes and immigrant children should be able to meet – and be treated equally whatever their ethnicity, sexual preferences, or gender. Everyone should be treated as equals. The solution is to meet across borders.”

“Why do considerable differences exist between schools? For example, swimming. I wear a head covering and cannot participate in the normal swimming lessons. When I requested swimming lessons for girls only, it was not possible to resolve the problem. Actually my grades are at risk every year when we have had sports.”

The right to health and best interest of the child

These Articles in the CRC deal with the right to get the support needed for a safe development.

3. Best interests of the child. In all actions concerning children, the best interest of the child shall be the major consideration.
6. Life, survival and development. The right of the child to life and the state's obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.
22. Refugee children. Special protection is to be given to refugee children. States shall cooperate with international agencies to this end and also to reunite children separated from the families.
24. Health care. Access to preventive and curative health care services as well as the gradual abolition of traditional practices harmful to the child.
25. Periodic review. The child who is placed for care, protection or treatment has the right to have the placement reviewed on a regular basis.

26. Social security. The child's right to social security.
27. Standard of living. Parental responsibility to provide adequate living conditions for the child's development even when one of the parents is living in a country other than the child's place of residence.
39. Recovery and reintegration. State obligations for the re-education and social reintegration of child victims of exploitation, torture or armed conflicts.

The UN recommends:

- The UN Child Rights Committee is concerned that the principle relating to best interests of the child is not in practice fully complied with, particularly on issues concerning children undergoing the process of seeking asylum. They recommend that Sweden ensures that the principle of 'the best for the child' is legally clearly defined and that social authorities and Migrationsverket (Swedish Migration Board) receive regular training on the meaning of Article 3 of the CRC.
- The UN recommends Sweden to be diligent concerning the health of children and youngsters, looking for signs of eating disorders, overweight and stress levels. It is essential that the various authorities collaborate to provide the best advice and treatment.
- The Committee is concerned that there is a lack of sufficient resources for the treatment of drug addicts under the age of 18 years.

Children's voices

"There are adults to talk to but they need to be more open, receptive and accessible. Children should not need to take the first step that can feel creepy and make you feel that everyone is pointing at you."

"Why is not simpler to contact the school nurse? They should be at school every day of the week."

Jag tycker att
 det borde finnas
 en kurator på varje
 skola, som kan lyssna
 när man mår dåligt
 och behöver prata.

“I think there should be a curator at every school who can listen when a student is feeling bad and needs to talk.”

The best interests of a child during a divorce conflict

A group of participants at a Hearing discussed the impact on a child during divorce proceedings. They explained that, when parents divorce, they often become very absorbed in their own feelings and do not listen enough to children. It can be that parents think they are protecting their children from suffering by not explaining what is happening, they perhaps think that a child would not understand. It is quite common that parents become angry which prevents a child from saying how they feel. *“It feels as though there is a deep hole inside.* Difficult divorce proceedings can result in depression for a child, and maybe even lead to the use of drugs and criminality. We therefore feel that:

- There should be a qualified adult to whom a child can talk to during parents' divorce proceedings.
- If a child is unhappy with a parents' new partner, the first priority of the parents must be their child.
- A child shall have the same right as the parents in choosing a place of residence.
- There ought to be more information concerning where a child can turn for support.
- There ought to be improved support for children during a divorce conflict.

The welfare of a child within Social Services

“Why is there such a lack of information relating to social services directed towards children? Most children conjure up a negative picture.”

Social services ought to be better at spreading information about their services and how they can be of help. For example, why not have a “theme” day at schools? At present, the words “social services” have a negative ring; they should strive to change this image. One idea is a compulsory talk with social services or a curator for all children so that children do not have to take the initiative. ***“A child can feel vulnerable during a group discussion; there should be opportunities to hold a one-on-one talk.”*** In other words, help should be more readily available so that a student has the strength to reach out and receive help. Another problem is that a student's parents must be present during a session with social services. ***“Parents can be manipulative, a student must break away and reach for help, often one looks up to parents. Self-doubt can arise with thoughts turning to parents; one's own problems can seem to become less important.”***

It is also important that children are aware of the consequences of reporting violations. One child expressed the following sentiments ***“If something happens, e.g. a dad hits his child, that child still loves his dad. It is complicated to talk with the police and curator as a curator must say something if something has happened”***.

Placement in a ‘family home’

To be put into a family home is not an easy matter. It is important to ensure the welfare of a child. Sometimes a child feels more secure with his/her biological parents in which case it would be beneficial if the biological family received direct support rather than placing a child outside his/her own home. At times, a child just wants to be placed with a secure family. ***“How many chan-***

ces should biological parents be allowed? Children become disillusioned. On several occasions a child moves back home. But it does not work and they return to a foster home. How many chances shall parents be given before it is time to say stop and a decision is made for a child to remain in the foster home until they are old enough to decide for themselves where they want to live?"

The way in which social services investigate a case is a crucial factor. Many children talk of contact persons from social services being replaced during an on-going investigation. It is vital to have a good social secretary following the entire process. In some cases an investigation commences around a child but not around the parents. An investigation ought to start with the parents concurrently to give them an honest chance to create a good relationship with the child.

"How much time must go before a child is told if he/she is to remain with the foster family or if he/she is to move back home to biological parents again? Some foster children dare not get too attached to their foster family to avoid being hurt if they are moved back home again."

"Why are social services permitted to separate siblings who get on well together when there are foster homes with the capacity to welcome them all?"

Many children are not happy with their foster homes and culture shocks do occur. If a family home practices any religion, it is essential that a child is informed about this and that a child is not force-fed the religion of the foster family.

Jag tycker att ni ska lyssna mer på vad vi barn/ungdomar vill. Jag har haft kv på mig och nu går jag massa utredningar hos soc. Jag tycker ni ska lyssna på vad vi vill och inte bli placerade.

"I think there should be a curator at every school who can listen when a student is feeling bad and needs to talk."

Refugee children

Many of the views put forward by children concerning the situation of refugee children relate to the care and education of children ‘hiding’ from the authorities, that all of Sweden’s municipalities ought to welcome refugee children and that the Dublin treaty should be scrapped. It is pleasing to note that certain improvements have taken place within these areas.

According to a stipulation in the EU courts, it is now the case the refugee children travelling alone, are exempted from the EU ‘first asylum country principle’ which means that refugees can have their case tried on arrival in the first EU country.

As the number of refugee children arriving alone into Sweden has increased, the government has proposed legislation which will mean that Migrationsverket (Swedish Migration Board) shall have the opportunity to direct refugee children travelling alone to municipalities which currently have not signed an agreement to receive refugee children. This new legislation is proposed to come into effect in January 2014.

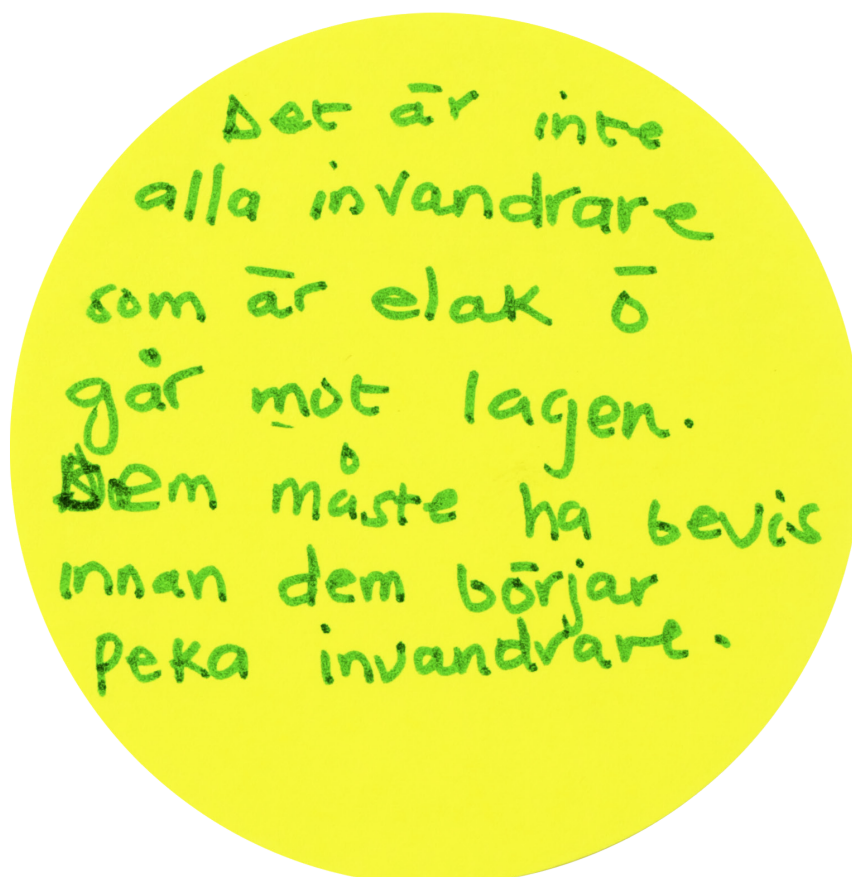
A new law which came into effect 1 July 2013 gives ‘hiding – no residence permit’ refugee children the right to attend school. The police are not allowed to enter the school to fetch the children for expulsion from the country. It is essential that this law results in complete security for these children so that they can go to and from school, can participate in field trips etc. At the same time this change in the law means that children living in Sweden without a permit can be offered complete health and medical care, including regular dental visits.

These same rights ought to apply to parents. ***“How do you think that children of parents with no official documents or permits and who suffer from psychological problems are influenced by the fact that their parents do not hold the right to any form of treatment?”***

Several questions have surfaced during the hearings concerning how a child’s welfare can be equated with the fact that a refugee child is not permitted to remain in Sweden. Questions were asked about the fact that siblings and families are separated. ***“If two children come, one is allowed to stay but not the other.”***

The project “Children’s’ voices from A to UN” held two workshops with refugee children travelling alone. Based on the criticism from the UN Child Rights Committee forwarded earlier to the Swedish government, the youngsters put forward the following proposals:

- The police should visit refugees and speak with them. Many of them are scared of the police because of previous experiences so it would be beneficial if the police arrived during a period of calm in order to establish a healthy relationship with the youngsters.
- It is important that Rädda Barnen (Save the Children) and other organisations not directly concerned with decision-making related to children make a visit and remind the children of their existence.
- Information on what a person can and cannot do in Sweden, misunderstandings arise easily. Something seen as harmless in one country can be seen as a criminal act in Sweden.
- It is important to find out to who one can turn if help is needed.
- More events ought to be arranged where Swedish youth and immigrant youth can meet. It is possible to live several years in Sweden and not have a single Swedish friend.



“Not all immigrants are mean and break the law. They need evidence before they start pointing to immigrants.”

Vi söker en godman som har mycket kunskap om tradition,
Kultur av ~~dem~~ som är från andra landet.

En person som har gått på skolan och vet mer om vad
dem gör.

En person som är Snäll, aktiv, klok och positiv, glad.

En person som kan vara där när vi behöver hjälp, och
går med ungdomarna när det behövs.

måsta lyssna på barnen.



*"We are searching for a child support manager who knows a lot about traditions and culture of those from other countries. Someone who has gone to school and knows more of what they are doing. Someone who is kind, active, wise and positive and always happy. Someone who can always be available when needed and is with the children when necessary.
Must listen to the children."*

- Media ought to spread a more positive picture of immigrants.
- In school, they should attend the same class as Swedish students, or at least read some subjects together, e.g. sports. It is also important to have field trips together and to celebrate the end of the school term together.

Right to protection

These Articles in the CRC deal your right to protection

- 11.** Illicit transfer and non-return of children. The State shall combat child kidnapping by a partner or third party.
- 16.** Privacy, honour, reputation. No child shall be subjected to interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence.
- 19.** Abuse and neglect (while in family or care). States have the obligation to protect children from all forms of abuse. Social programmes and support services shall be made available.
- 32.** Economic exploitation. The right of the child to protection against harmful forms of work and against exploitation.
- 33.** Narcotic and psychotic substances. Protection of the child from their illicit use and the utilisation of the child in their production and distribution.
- 34.** Sexual exploitation. Protection of the child from sexual exploitation including prostitution and the use of children in pornographic materials.
- 35.** Abduction, sale and traffic. State obligation to prevent the abduction, sale of or traffic in children.
- 36.** Other forms of exploitation.
- 37.** Torture, capital punishment, deprivation of liberty. Obligation of the State vis-a-vis children in detention.
- 38.** Armed conflicts. Children under 15 years are not to take a direct part in hostilities. No recruitment of children under 15.
- 40.** Juvenile justice. Treatment of child accused of infringing the penal law shall promote the child's sense of dignity.

Children's voices

Throughout the hearings, no questions or opinions around these Articles were raised, except that the Swedish government ought to do more to see that persons who commit sex crimes against children abroad, be duly tried and judged in Sweden.

The right to education

These Articles of the CRC deal with your right to education.

- 28. Education. The right to free primary education, the availability of vocational educating, and the need for measures to reduce the drop-out rates.
- 29. Aims of education. Education should foster the development of the child's personality and talents, preparation for a responsible adult life, respect for human rights as well as the cultural and national values of the child's country and that of others.

Children's voices

Confusing environment

"I feel that the teachers at our school are too easy-going. I think it is stupid because I am afraid that we are not learning enough. And one of our teachers just sighs and says "ohhhh"! It is really a pity. And I enjoy school and don't want teachers to destroy it."

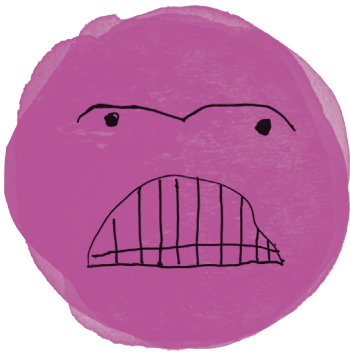
"I would like the teachers to reprimand us more so that it is not so noisy and disorderly."

"It is disorderly in our class and the teachers have difficulties keeping things under control. Nobody has any respect for her."

"It is total chaos at my school, everyone screams and runs around."

"When we did 'reading comprehension' during the National Test in English, the boys made such a noise that we couldn't hear what was said. Our class will have poorer grades because of that."

“Is it so that adults also feel the stress that we constantly live under? Why not break the stress norm? Are we expected to shit in our pants from stress from high school to the grave? / An upset critic.”



The need of speciality pedagogues

“We feel there ought to be more specially trained pedagogues so that children with problems can develop at the same level as everyone else. For mathematics there are often special pedagogues but there are children who have difficulties in other subjects, e.g. SO (History, geography, religion, social studies), NO (chemistry, physics, biology), Swedish, music, sport and other subjects. Those children who do not excel in Swedish e.g. are given poor grades and with poor grades there are no good jobs.”

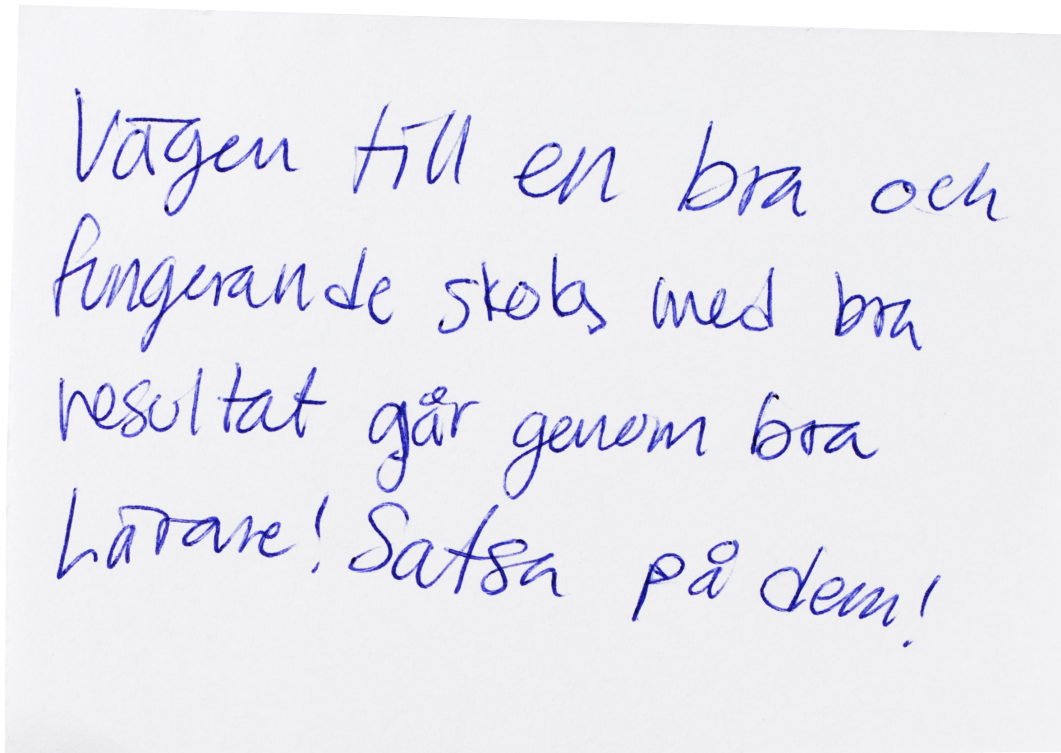
School meals

Many students are dissatisfied with the quality of the meals served at their schools. This applies particularly to schools lacking kitchens and where food is warmed up on the premises but prepared elsewhere. This also influences quantities of food: if it is tasty it happens frequently that there is not sufficient food for everyone while there are always plenty of left-overs if the food is not to the liking of the students.

All children should receive good, nourishing school meals – in all communities. There should always be a vegetarian alternative and the food served should contribute towards climate awareness. More locally produced and ecological food should appear on the menu.

Believe in your pupils!

“My friends who attend different schools have to adapt to the demands of their schools. In this school Adapt to our needs. We have lots of fun here!”



"The way to a good and functional school with good results is through the teachers! Bet on them!"

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Framtagen med stöd av Arvsfonden.



