

XI. Appendix: Detailed results of child consultations carried out by REIPER and its members

As part of the preparation of the alternative report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, REIPER members carried out various consultations with 198 children and young adults (53% of whom were girls) aged between 5 and 22 years¹. They were carried out between April 2021 and December 2022 in the two largest urban areas of Congo: Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, as well as in the rural area of Kingoué, in the Bouenza department.

They dealt with the rights of the child, in particular the right to education, health, food, family, leisure, protection against violence or the right to identity. They also looked into the status of these rights for children in particular situations such as indigenous children, children in street situations, children accused of witchcraft, girl mothers, etc.

They took place in a variety of formats: open discussion groups, drawing activities, letter-writing activities, workshops to develop recommendations, etc. These consultations had the same objective of consulting children on their experiences and understanding of their rights as well as the obstacles to their full enjoyment. These consultations had the same objective of consulting children on their experiences and understanding of their rights as well as the obstacles to the full realisation of their rights.

Date	Number of boys	Number of girls	Total	Age group
04/21	20	14	34	12-19 years
07/22	0	10	10	14-20 years
	0	10	10	15-22 years
	0	11	11	14-20 years
07/22	15	0	15	10-20 years
	10	0	10	9-21 years
07/22	20	0	20	6-18 years
07/22	10	0	10	12-20 years
09/22	9	16	25	8-15 years
10/22	0	27	27	16-21 years old
12/22	1	11	12	5-16 years
12/22	8	6	14	5-19 years
04/21 -12/22	93	105	198	5-22 years
	46,97%	53,03%	100%	

¹ The oldest were young people followed by REIPER member structures and who had testified about their former condition as children.

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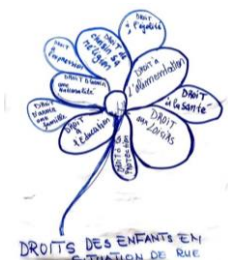
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TOPIC 1: Rights of children in street situations

- Keywords

"protection', 'health', 'stigma', 'education', 'abuse', 'family', 'nutrition', 'street'

- Drawings



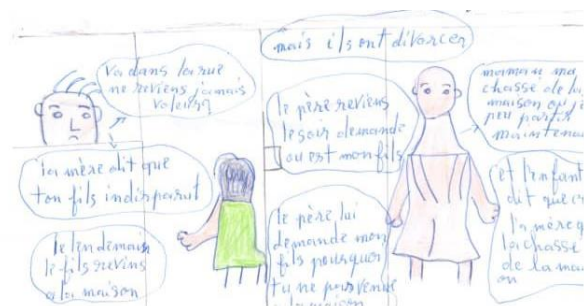
The children, as a group, represented the fundamental rights of children in street situations in the petals of the flower, indicating that these rights are indispensable for the development of minors in street situations.

Here, the young person has put into pictures the situation that led him to be on the street:

"Go to the street, never come back, thief!"

The father returns in the evening and asks "where is my son? The mother says that their son has disappeared.

The next day, the son comes home. The father asks him "Son, why didn't you come home? "Mama chased me out of the house where I could go now. The child says that it was the mother who chased him out of the house.



But they got divorced.

- *Verbatims* and statements reported in the 3rd person

a. General

"Parents must listen to their children".

"These children have a right to family consideration. Among them, others have lost their parents.

"These children are living in inappropriate situations".

"Street children have the right to a home, to a family, to a nationality, to medical care

"Without social assistance, we can't fight against the phenomenon of street children".

A 10 year old complains that the right to protection is not respected on the street.

A 19 year old thinks that the state should take care of children living on the streets. It should put in place appropriate services that deal with children living on the streets.

A 17 year old thought that access to nationality was difficult for these children.

When discussing the right to protection, children highlighted different issues such as the lack of respect for the rights of children in street situations, the facilitation of access to education by the state, the lack of leisure time, and the fact that there should not be a time limit for registering births.

b. About parental abandonment

"The parents leave the children all alone at home [...] and without anything to eat".

"Parents drop their children off with grandparents who are old, sometimes disabled, and lack the means and capacity to care for them.

"Some children are beaten and chased out of the house by their parents".

"Parents expressly throw away their children, deliberately pushing them astray".

"There are children who cannot go to their father's or mother's home because they are remarried.

c. About the right to family

"The remarriage of parents, after divorce, forces children to go and live with the extended family, which is not always easy because very often there is mistreatment, rejection of responsibility, accusations, injustice...

d. About the right to food

"No canteen for children in street situations".

"Children are insulted when they go to ask for food or beaten when they find it necessary to steal to eat.

The children underline the lack of reception and food facilities for children living on the streets.

e. About the right to health

"In case of illness, it is life or death. Either the sick person is abandoned in the street, lying on the ground without any particular attention from the public, or it is a person of good will, a passer-by, a salesman or saleswoman whom the sick child is used to helping, who comes to help him or her with the medicines on the street² "

"Children in street situations are often turned away or poorly received in hospitals".

The young people emphasised that there are no facilities for the reception and health care of children in street situations.

f. On the right to education

"A child in a street situation can never go to school, except when he or she is taken care of by a structure or a foster family".

The young people highlighted the lack of reception centres and school education for children in street situations.

g. About the right to protection

"Life on the street is hard. In the street, violence is manifested by provocations, incitement to fight, insults".

"In the street, children are sexually harassed, there are children who are abused by the biggest and the tallest men.

The young people also mentioned that each child experiences violence that varies according to the environment and the group they are part of.

- **Written expressions**

"Living on the street, children lose everything. They take on other names, they don't go to school, they are cut off from their families, they are beaten, abused, abandoned. They do not receive any special attention or protection from the police, who, on the contrary, consider them very badly. They are arbitrarily arrested and incarcerated in police stations or gendarmerie posts under the pretext of being thieves, bandits, rapists, sorcerers, members of criminal associations (*Ka³*, Arab, American).

"Parents must listen to their children. They must pay attention to their children, because children need parental love and family consideration. Every child must receive a school and moral education. Nowadays, there are children in inappropriate situations because they have not been well looked after by their parents, and some [children] have lost their parents. [...]. Society must organise itself to give children the rights they deserve. For these children need a home (house, orphanage), they also have the right to education, love, consideration, a family, a nationality, medical care, clothing. Without social assistance, we cannot fight against this situation of street children. [...] We need the government to create a centre [...] to provide for the success and future of the children.

² In Congo, "street medicines" are medicines sold by street vendors without a prescription. The people who buy them are not advised by a doctor and practice self-medication.

³ Also known as 'black babies' in Brazzaville, this term refers to youth gangs.

Dans la famille
 J'étais dans la rue je vivait chez
 ma mère pour manger il fallait que
 je demande l'argent aux hommes bien
 mais je ne parlais jamais l'espère
 un autre fois commença mon père mourir
 le premier était mon père.
 deux semaines après mon père.
 morte dans la rue la vie est difficile
 jusqu'à ce que la place de l'alle abandonner.
 Deux ans plus tard.
 ce fois père d'aten son père son mère est morte
 après le jours suivants le fois père d'aten
 un père comment faire l'argent pour vivre
 mettre la table l'argent les enfants, aller à
 l'école et aller à l'église. et aujourd'hui j'ai
 en mon CEPE je suis en 6^{ème}.

"I was on the streets, living with my mother. To eat, I had to ask good men for money but I never lost hope. Another hell began, my father died first, before my mother. We were left with my sister and my mother on the street. Life is difficult. Sometimes I don't have room to go to sleep.

TWO YEARS LATER :

The hostel [...] took me, my mother stayed. Afterwards, in the following days, the hostel [...] taught me how to wash the plates, clean the table, wash the clothes, go to school and go to church. And today I got my [illegible]. I am in grade 6^{ème}.

- Transcribed testimony of a child in a street situation

Séverin and his two sisters were living happily as a family until their father died of HIV/AIDS. Just after the funeral, the father's family decided, against all odds, to occupy the house left by the deceased on the pretext that it is built on the family plot. Taken in by a friend, a widow and her children, the orphans were housed in a fairly large room that she had transformed into a living room by putting a curtain in the middle. The financial difficulties that the widow was beginning to face made her increasingly dependent on her friend, which weakened their relationship and led the widow to squat with her children in an abandoned tin house where she ran a small business selling sundries. But soon her health deteriorated and she too died of HIV/AIDS two years later, leaving three orphans.

The three children, rejected by both sides of their family, finally fell into the street where Séverin (then aged 9) joined the group of children in street situations in Poto-Poto, known as 'Nzoyi' (bees). Spotted by a social worker from the CAS in Mougali, the three orphans were placed [in a centre] after spending nine months on the street.

In [centre], Séverin was reintegrated into school in CE1 class when he was 10 years old. At the age of 14, he obtained his CEPE but ended his studies at 20 after failing the BEPC twice. Very quickly, he was placed in an apprenticeship, first in hairdressing and then in electricity. Today, Séverin is 25 years old. He is one of the children at the [centre] who have become adults and are waiting to become independent [...].

TOPIC 2: Rights of 'witch' children

- Verbatims

"A child's disobedience to his parents can lead to him being called a 'witch'. This is not right. He has no right to that.

So-called "witch children" have the right to be treated like all children and not as poisons⁵ that are shunned because they kill or can cause death.

"So-called 'witch children' are being abused. This is not right. They have no right to this.

⁵ In the Congo, 'poison' behaviour is a pernicious, evil attitude adopted with a view to negatively influencing the life of another person. A child known as a 'sorcerer' is considered to be 'poisonous' because he or she is likely to cast a bad spell, to harm or prevent the realisation of vital or advantageous actions or events, for his or her parents for example.

"The state must support the so-called 'witch children' by providing them with a good education, a life plan, etc."

"The state can make parents aware of how to live with children."

- Drawings

This drawing illustrates a report made by the children:



[They are called that because of] disobedience. The mother can be the cause, I myself can be a "witch" in relation to my poisonous behaviour⁶.

[When you're a so-called 'witch' child, you have a] lack of consideration or lack of education, lack of support, lack of parents, it depends.

[We must] also reengage parents, [who must] love and care for children.

The state must support the children.

- Written expressions

"Many children suffer because they sometimes go without food, or turn to delinquency. They can be killed, caught, and put in prison. Sometimes they are raped, assaulted, called 'witches' [...]"

TOPIC 3: Family law

- Keywords

"Education", "abuse", "family", "nutrition", "street", "having a family", "having a home".

- *Verbatims* and statements reported in the 3rd person

"The remarriage of parents, after divorce, forces children to go and live with the extended family, which is not always easy because very often there is mistreatment, rejection of responsibility, accusations, injustice..."

"A sick child must be cared for in the family

"Daddy has to feed the children".

"Daddy must protect the children".

For young people, parents have to take care of the children, their care, their schooling, their food.

⁶ In the Congo, 'poison' behaviour is a pernicious, evil attitude adopted with a view to negatively influencing the life of another person. A child known as a 'sorcerer' is considered to be 'poisonous' because he or she is likely to cast a bad spell, to harm or prevent the realisation of vital or advantageous actions or events, for his or her parents for example.

"Family is not necessarily the same blood. Family can be the person you rely on.

"Even if it's not family, there can be love

"The family is like a big heart

"Children have a right to a family because in a family, that is where they are going to get love, food, education, communication, they are located and supported, they are accompanied and protected, etc."

"The family is there to educate and accompany children. It doesn't matter what the "nature" of these children is.

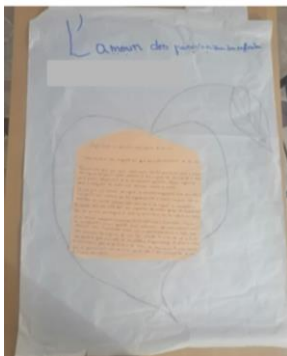
"In the family, treat all children equally

Some children pointed to a problem of exclusion within families, with bright elders taking authority over younger children, who then no longer go to school.

When the right to protection was mentioned, the children emphasised their difficult conditions in the families (housing, nutrition, clothing, etc.).

While the young people were consulted about the right to education, some spontaneously expressed themselves on the right to family by verbalising their desire to be in a family.

- Drawings



This drawing is accompanied by the inscription: "The love of parents for their children".

One young person commented on the drawing: "The family is like a big heart. The heart that you can see on our paper that we just drew and that is framed by the flower.

By these words and the inclusion of the rights of the child in the heart, it expresses that the family unit can and should, as far as possible, be the privileged framework for the exercise of these rights.

mai je le droit à l'éducation et le droit
 nutrition, et le droit habillage.
 Vraiment je constate les enfants de mon
 âge sont abandonnés à cause de leur
 famille. Ce n'est pas très bon. Une
 maman cherche de l'argent, je me rappelle j'étais
 à l'âge de 8 ans, je portais par à l'école.
 Ce grâce j'étais maintenant au foyer.
 à Dieu j'étais maintenant au foyer.
 je te remercie tous les personnes les en fait
 que j'étais au foyer, j'étais au foyer.
 ont des droits.

"I have the right to education and the right to nutrition, and the right to clothing.

Really I see children of my age are abandoned because of their family. It's not too late, come closer to their father. I remember I was 8 years old. I didn't go to school.

I am now at home [...] I thank all the people who made me be at home [...]. All children have rights."

TOPIC 4: Right to food

- *Verbatims* and statements reported in the 3rd person

"No canteen for children in street situations".

"Children are insulted when they go to ask for food or beaten when they find it necessary to steal to eat."

"To go to school, you have to eat."

When talking about the right to protection, the children emphasised the difficulties families face in accessing 'nutrition'.

The children emphasised that, in order to go to school, they must have food first in order to have energy and to be able to attend classes. They mention the lack of food as a major obstacle to education, expressing that in order to learn well, one has to "endure hunger".

The young people consulted emphasised the lack of reception and food facilities for children in street situations.

- Written expressions

"On the street, children's rights are not respected. Many children suffer because they sometimes lack food, or turn to delinquency. [...] In reality, the child has the right to be fed and educated [...]".

"Indeed, on the street, children's rights are violated. [...] For a start, it's not as easy as that, because they lack food and shelter. They are therefore exposed to many risks that lead straight to death.

TOPIC 5: Right to health

- *Verbatims* and statements reported in the 3rd person

"In case of illness, it is life or death. Either the sick person is abandoned in the street, lying on the ground without any particular attention from the public, or it is a person of good will, a passer-by, a salesman or saleswoman whom the sick child is used to helping, who comes to help him or her with the medicines on the street"⁹

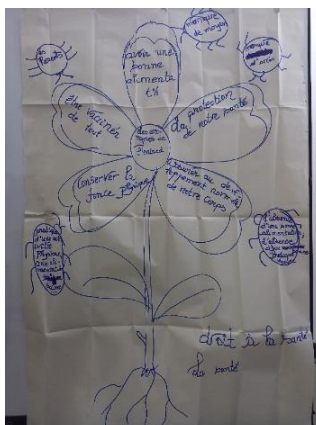
"Children in street situations are often turned away or poorly received in hospitals".

The young people emphasised that there are no facilities for the reception and health care of children in street situations.

- Drawings



These drawings are among those that illustrate the importance of the right to health for children.



Through this collective drawing, the young people listed concrete elements of the right to health:

The following are some of the most important elements of this report: "physical activity", "healthy eating", "being vaccinated against everything", "having a good diet", "protecting our health", "ensuring the normal development of our body" and "maintaining physical strength".

The insects that interfere with the blossoming of the flower, and therefore of this right, are: "lack of means", "parents", "lack of access", "lack of good nutrition", and "lack of good physical exercise".

⁹ In Congo, "street medicines" are medicines sold by street vendors without a prescription. The people who buy them are not advised by a doctor and practice self-medication.

TOPIC 6: Right to education

- *Verbatims* and statements reported in the 3rd person

"A child in a street situation can never go to school, except when he or she is taken care of by a structure or a foster family".

"Without school, you can't do anything

"You have to go to school to work and to be rich

Among the reasons why the right to education is important, children noted: "to become a great person in life", "to succeed in the future", "to know how to read, write and speak".

They identify the following as barriers to education: 'lack of funding', 'parental impediments', 'teacher abuse', 'bad friends'.

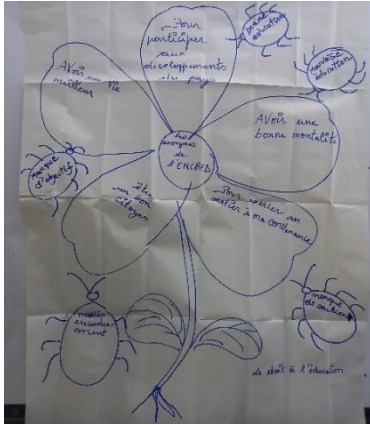
Finally, they consider that among the means of accessing education, it is particularly helpful to: "having good friends", "enduring hunger", "sharing money with friends".

The young people underlined the lack of reception centres and school education for children in street situations and emphasised the "facilitation by the state of access to education". Several children expressed their desire to go to school.

- Drawings

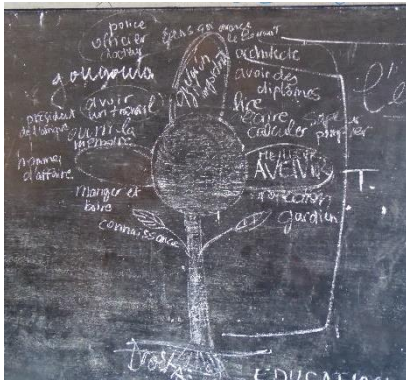


These drawings illustrating the right to health were made by the children when they were asked to put into pictures the right that is most important to them.



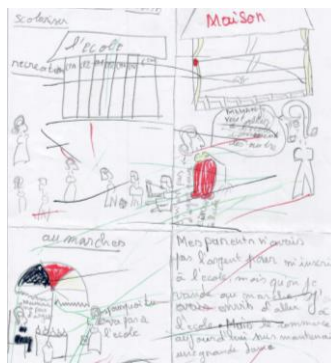
Through this collective drawing, the young people listed the benefits of access to education: "to be a good citizen", "to have a better life", "to participate in the development of the country", "to have a good mentality", "to have a job that suits me".

The insects that interfere with the flower's, and therefore this right's, blossoming are: "lack of purpose", "poor supervision", "lack of support" and "poor education".



Through this collective drawing, the young people listed the benefits of access to education:

- Possibility of exercising the following professions: "President of Africa", "businessman", "police", "officer", "doctor", "guard", "architect" or "fireman
- Having a "better future" and "becoming someone important
- Access to 'knowledge', 'eating and drinking', having a 'job', 'reading, writing, calculating'.
- "Opening the memory"¹⁰



A young girl made a short comic strip expressing her difficulties in getting an education before she was taken into the care of the Apprentis d'Auteuil partners, due to the poverty situation in which her family found itself.

The caption to his drawings reads: "My parents didn't have the money to send me to school, but to sell at the market. I wanted to go to school. But trade today...".

● Written expressions

"In the street, children's rights are not respected. [...] In reality, the child has the right to be fed and educated. For me, we children who live on the street have rights like any other child. The street has never given birth to a child, we are born of a family, a mother and a father. A child who is not well looked after by his family ends up on the street. I [never wanted] to end up on the street, like any child. But it's the family conditions that [left me] no choice. A child on the street is a child who has a zero life.

¹⁰ It is an expression meaning that someone has been allowed to be enlightened.

"I was with my family, I was really struggling.

For example: going to school or eating, for me it was really difficult.

TOPIC 7: Right to protection

- Keywords

"Insults", "humiliations by mother-in-law", "rejection", "exposure by sisters", "verbal, sexual harassment", "multiform accusations", "deprivation of speech", "bodily overexploitation", "sexual exploitation", "assaults", "assault and battery", "abandonment by parents", "humiliations", "insults", "education", "abuse", "family", "nutrition", "street"

- *Verbatims* and statements reported in the 3^{ème} person

"Life on the street is hard. It is marked by violence and children are exposed. In the street, violence is manifested by provocation, incitement to fight, insults".

"In the street, children are sexually harassed, there are children who are abused by the biggest and the tallest men.

The young people emphasised that each child experiences this violence according to the environment and the group he or she is part of.

- Written testimonies

"I was a victim of several abuses in my parents' home, by [my father's wife], her little brother and his family. When I was 9 years old, my father's little brother made me his sexual object because my father had no money to buy a house. He gave me to his brother, and after I told my father that, he didn't want me anymore.

"I like to leave the house to live more comfortably, [to have] a place where I can live in peace. Even for eating I often suffer for it."

"On the street, children's rights are not respected. Many children suffer [...]. They can be killed, caught, and put in prison. Sometimes they are raped, assaulted, called 'witches'. [A child in the street is a child who has a zero life.

Indeed, in the street, children's rights are flouted. Few citizens come to their aid, or else most of the time they are neglected, taken by the elders, raped, beaten, tortured without any mercy. A child in the street is forced to follow the orders of the elders, forced to sell drugs, and sometimes gets arrested by the police, yet they are rejected by society, and shot. [...] They are therefore exposed to several risks that lead straight to death. [...], just after I entered this centre, there were shootings on my relatives, that we hung out together but did not have the same chance as me today, they experienced the loss of their lives. So the rights of children in street situations are not respected.

TOPIC 8: Right to non-discrimination

- Keywords

"violence", "suffering", "rejection", "neglect", "law", "drugs", "law enforcement", "protect"

- Verbatims

"Tatas and "boubou" mums abuse children".

"Women do not have power over men".

"Some parents who have deaf-mute children do not send them to school

"Pregnant girls can't go to school

"The deaf, the blind, the villagers¹¹, street children have nothing to eat

"Daughter-mothers have no support

"Prostitutes suffer rape, abuse, sexual violence

- Drawing



On a flower, different causes and manifestations of discrimination were inscribed (being a "villager"¹², children in street situations, disabled, illiterate, thief, prostitute...), with their multiple impacts on the daily life of discriminated people (violence, exclusion, sexual abuse...). Also included are some possible solutions (job creation, no favouritism, having a place to stay and an entourage, respect...). The loaded drawing shows that the profiles of children who are mocked and excluded are many and varied.

TOPIC 9: Right to identity

¹¹ In the Congo, the term 'villager' or 'peasant' is used to describe a person who is boorish, uneducated or poorly educated, impolite, with rude manners and language. Used in a discriminatory sense, these terms are insulting and imply or induce social distancing.

¹² In the Congo, the term 'villager' or 'peasant' is used to describe a person who is boorish, uneducated or poorly educated, impolite, with rude manners and language. Used in a discriminatory sense, these terms are insulting and imply or induce social distancing.

- *Verbatims*

"Normally, a birth certificate should be free, should not be paid for, because it is a right! Boy of Rwandan origin, 15 years old

"Because of her foreign origin, a girl in my class is discriminated against, the other pupils and even the teachers say to her: "Go over there foreigner, you are from the DRC!

"Why do foreign children have to pay more than Congolese children, when we have the same rights?

"I feel excluded at school because I only speak English" Namibian boy, 16

"We still see many children without birth certificates, it hurts me" Young girl

"Many families are poor and cannot register their children at birth because of lack of means", "Some parents ignore the importance of the birth certificate, it allows the child to be recognised", "Some parents are irresponsible" Young boy

"I have a friend in the village who doesn't go to school because he doesn't have a birth certificate" Young boy

- Drawings



These drawings identify the family as a pillar of access to the right to identity because at the root, at the origin of this right, there is the family, which gives a name, often transmits a nationality and receives the birth certificate of children.

On each petal is inscribed a positive consequence of access to the right to identity: "health", "family", "to express oneself", "to say one's name", "to be loved", "to choose one's religion", "schooling" and "nutrition". Around the plant gravitate insects, parasites, representing the obstacles to access and implementation of this right: "war", "lack of financial means", "immigration", "rural exodus", "death of a parent", "lack of money", "lack of support", "irresponsibility of parents", "negligence", "ignorance of the importance of the birth certificate" and "lack of rigour on the part of the state regarding the identity of citizens".

- Recommendation

We recommend measures to accompany the law on free civil status documents in the Republic of Congo by 2023.

TOPIC 10: Indigenous peoples' rights

- *Verbatims*

"Indigenous people are rejected by others" Young girl

"Many indigenous children do not go to school" Young girl

"Why don't all indigenous children have birth certificates?"

- Recommendations

We recommend that by 2024 decree 2019-199 of 12 July 2019 should be applied, in its article 3, concerning the free delivery of civil status certificates to indigenous populations.

We recommend that by 2025 a reception and training centre for indigenous children be set up in every department of the Congo to enable indigenous children to have access to education in accordance with Article 2 of Decree 2019-204 of 12 July 2019 on special measures to facilitate access to education for indigenous children and literacy for adults.

TOPIC 11: Right to leisure

- Keywords

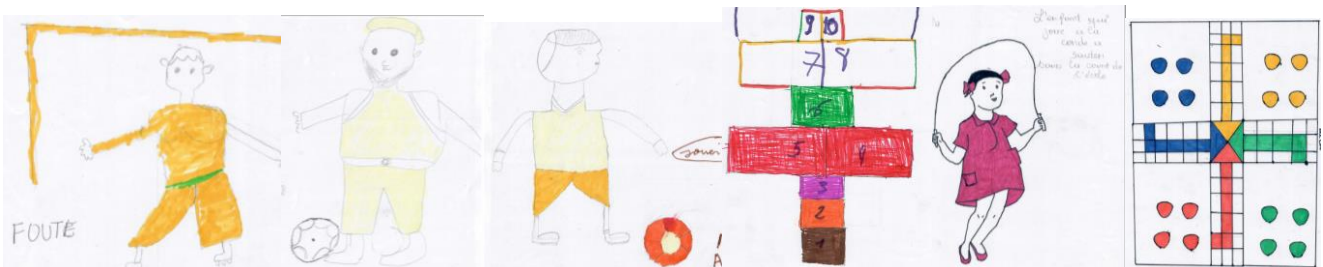
"Right to play" (8 out of 14 children), "relaxation", "fulfilment", "joy".

- *Verbatims* and statements reported in the 3^{ème} person

Young people expressed that leisure activities "de-stress". It develops the brain and muscles and has a "fulfilling" effect. For some, leisure "is knowledge, discovery, laughter, joy, expression", but also "new ideas, colouring, learning", or "teaching, discipline, walking, entertainment".

Some children point out that "the summer camp offers all this, but the home does not have a football field, nor the space to do it all".

- Drawings



These drawings illustrating the right to leisure were made by the children when they

They were asked to put in pictures the right that they consider most important.

- Messages

"The [host organisation] must organise outings for the children, for example: a holiday camp, an excursion, buy toys for the children in the homes, make visits to places the children do not know, involve all the children in all the orphanages. Young girl

"Let the [home] buy us *play*, balloons... so we don't get frustrated. Why don't we visit other orphanages?" Young boy

"My message: encouragement in everything we do at the level (home, network of partners, host families...), participation of the children in activities. Young girl, 19 years old

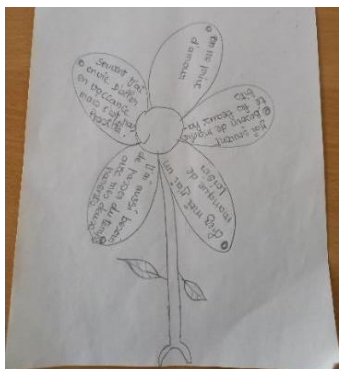
"My message is that there should be holiday camps, that there should be activities to develop the children, to go to church every Sunday. Young boy

"More holiday camps, outings, fun, laughter" Young boy, 12 years old

Other results of the consultations



These drawings are made in a workshop that allows them to express that their rights are part of their development. Each petal represents a different right, which is either named or described by the child who drew it



The little girl who drew this flower expressed her shortcomings:

- "I often want to go on holiday, but it's not possible.
- "I am being deprived of love".
- "I need to spend time with both my parents".
- "I often need to buy nice clothes".
- "I have a lack of leisure time at home".



This drawing lists the wishes of children and young people in pictures for their rights:

- Let's make the city beautiful;
- Don't put children in prison;
- Right to a birth certificate ;
- Education of children.