

Save the Children Youth Sweden's input to the List of Issues Prior to Reporting

Sweden's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/SWE/6-7)



1. Summary

This report contains suggestions from Save the Children Youth Sweden (*Rädda Barnens Ungdomsförbund*, henceforth referred to as "RBUF") to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on potential issues to address in the List of Issues Prior to Reporting to be delivered to the Swedish government. The report contains a brief summary of RBUF, as well as a thorough description of the methods used to obtain the presented suggestions. In addition, the suggestions are provided together with a short closing statement. It is the hope of RBUF that the Committee will take our proposed issues into account in the reporting process.

Given the unique position of RBUF as a child- and youth-led organization solely focused on the rights of all children in Sweden, we believe that our views on the Swedish government's policies regarding children are highly relevant.

2. About RBUF

RBUF gathers over 2000 children and young people from all parts of Sweden who want to fight for children's rights. We are an antiracist and queer feminist organization founded in 2003 where everyone up to the age 26 can be a member. We work to make sure that the Convention on the Rights of the Child is respected and complied with. We also work to give children the power to change their own and other children's situations.

RBUF is a democratic organization, built on voluntary work, containing 10 local and thematic associations, all working towards the same goal. The RBUF board is elected by its members once per year at the annual "Barnrättskongressen" (Child Rights Congress). Working within the mandate given to them by members, the Board leads the organization in between annual meetings.

3. Background and method

The report was written by a working group on Child Rights Governance consisting of several members of the RBUF Board. The group was initially created in 2017 by a group of members including Jorge Maria Londono, Hanna Thessén and Karl Holmberg. To build knowledge, the group organised a study visit to Geneva where we met with members of the Committee, Save the Children Advocacy Office in Geneva, Child Rights Connect and other relevant stakeholders. In its current composition, the group is chaired by Elina Boneva, and also consisted of Hanna Thessén, Petter Martinsson, Vendela Carlfjord and Dejan Bojanic. Over the course of several meetings, both in-person and on digital platforms, the working group established the process through which information for the report will have been gathered. In addition, the working group provided their own input to the content of the report, each contributing with their own unique perspectives from being a child or a young person in Sweden. The rest of RBUF's Board who did not participate in the group were also involved at certain points, where they were asked to contribute with their thoughts on the process as well as their own personal input to the content.

The primary source for the questions presented in this report came directly from our members. The members were asked to contribute at a workshop that was held in connection to one of our "Activist weekends" in Gothenburg in April of 2019, which was attended by 54 children and youth. At Activist weekends, which we usually organize twice a year, RBUF provide an opportunity for members all over the country to gather at a certain location to discuss important issues, as well as to hang out and meet their peers. During the 2-hour workshop, our members were asked to contribute with their thoughts on how children's

rights are being violated in Sweden and how the situation for children in Sweden can be improved. Several methods were employed to facilitate the discussions, which can be seen in a presentation of the material produced during the workshop provided in the appendix. In addition, detailed transcripts were made of the discussions.

In addition to the workshop in Gothenburg, we organised another workshop on the theme of violence against children in Stockholm, on 9th June 2019. The 35 participants were children and young people living in poor suburbs in Stockholm.

The last workshop with the purpose of gathering input for the LOIPR took place 8th December in Upplands-Bro. During the workshop, 12 young people had the chance to phrase a question that they wanted to submit to the Committee.

4. Suggestions for LOIPR

Our input for the list of issues is clustered into five different areas. Most areas contains several questions, which are displayed below.

A) Child Poverty

- How is the government going to increase its efforts to combat child poverty in Sweden?
- What barriers are preventing the state from investing sufficient financial and other resources to eradicate child poverty in Sweden?
- How is the government planning to eliminate all cases of homelessness among children?

B) Asylum Seekers

- Why isn't the government taking a more active role in ensuring that children fleeing conflict zones are given asylum in Sweden?
- Why is the government employing the degrading and questionable practice of medical procedures to determine the age of young asylum seekers?
- The current asylum policies are shown to increase stress and anxiety among young asylum seekers, nevertheless due to insufficient rates of family reunification, long processing time to obtain a migration status and temporary residence permits. What steps is the government going to take to design policies which do not cause poor mental health among young asylum seekers in Sweden?

C) Schools

- What is the government's plan to end bullying in Swedish schools?
- When is the Government going to ensure equity in the education system by putting an end to the harmful practice of allowing profit-driven companies to run schools in Sweden?
- How is the government planning to address the growing issue of stress and mental illness among pupils in Swedish schools?
- What is the government doing to ensure that LGBTQ+-children are protected from discrimination in the Swedish school system?
- What programs and policies is the government going to apply to further its efforts to eliminate discrimination of children based on sexual orientation and gender identity?

D). Right to be heard

- When does the government plan to take necessary steps to lower the legal voting age in public office elections to 16?
- When is Sweden going to ratify the third optional protocol?

E). Violence Against Children

- Why isn't violence against children classified as a separate crime in Sweden's juristical system?
- When will the government introduce a new penal provision for child abuse that includes mental abuse and neglect.
- What is the government doing to ensure that all children who have been victims of crime in Sweden, no matter their geographical residence, have access to child-safe environments of high-quality?
- When is Sweden going to start collecting data on instances and types of child abuse committed by security guards and other private law enforcement authorities commissioned by the state to keep public safety?

5. Closing statements

In RBUF we see the review procedure as the single most important and effective tool in the struggle to create improvements for children. The reporting process to the Committee on the Rights of the Child is very important to us. A right is meaningless if the owner of the right does not have the ability to claim responsibility from the party who violates the right and get reparation.

We believe that children are experts of their own situations and hope that this attempt to raise the voices of children in Sweden will be well received and that the questions we suggest will be used by the committee.

