



Alternative Report of Romanian Children

Regarding the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

WHY ARE WE HERE?

We are here to give a voice to the needs and wishes of children in Romania, including Ukrainian refugee children in our country, ensuring that every child is heard and respected, regardless of ethnicity, disability, or gender.

The report we created reflects the voices of **60.000 children** from across the country who have been consulted in recent years. It delivers a powerful message about the urgent need to prioritize children's rights.



Violence



Education



Underage mothers



Health

Prevention of substance abuse



Foster children



Human trafficking

Violence in schools

A threat that leaves deep scars

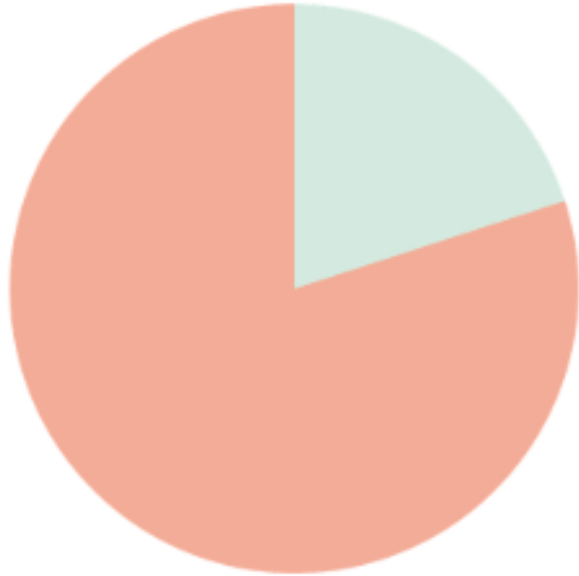
Physical violence and bullying are more than fleeting incidents; they are traumas that shatter self-confidence and disrupt children's development. Teachers often fail to intervene effectively, reporting platforms are unreliable, and victims stay silent out of fear.

We want anonymous reporting systems, annual monitoring of violence levels, strict policies against aggressors, and training teachers to respond effectively. Regular informational sessions can also educate and empower students, creating a safer school environment.



Violence in schools

A threat that leaves deep scars



4 out of 5 children witness bullying incidents



1 in 2 students is a victim of threats, humiliation, or physical violence

Domestic violence

A secret that should not be hidden

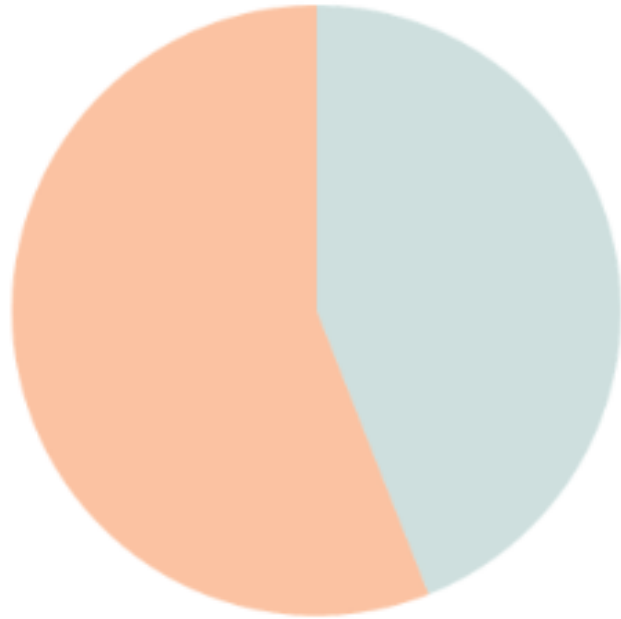
In many families, physical punishment is wrongly viewed as a “*blessing from heaven*”, leading children to grow up in fear rather than love, normalizing violence as acceptable behavior. A lack of positive education for parents and children’s fear of reporting abuse perpetuate this cycle.

We want campaigns to educate parents about non-violent discipline, and emotional support programs for children, helping to break the pattern and create healthier family dynamics.

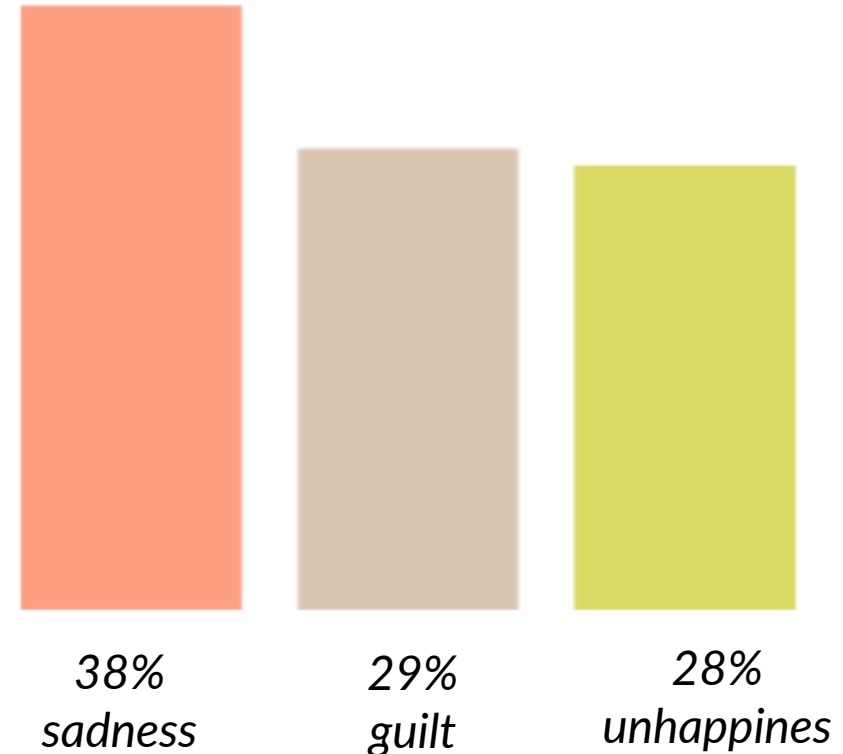


Domestic violence

A secret that should not be hidden



56% of parents have stated that they punish their children if they make mistakes



According to the studies from 2021

Mental health

More than a trend, a necessity

The pressures of school and bullying are destroying students' mental health, while counselors are few and often inaccessible. Students going through difficult situations are ridiculed instead of being helped, and victims of bullying are ignored.

We want efficient psychological tests for teachers and medical staff to assess and improve their ability to interact appropriately with students, and an online platform where children can access mental health information and assistance from professionals.

Also, **we want** therapy programs for bullying victims and students with aggressive behavior, including sessions on emotional management and personal development, and workshops and educational activities about emotions and mental health integrated into the school curriculum.

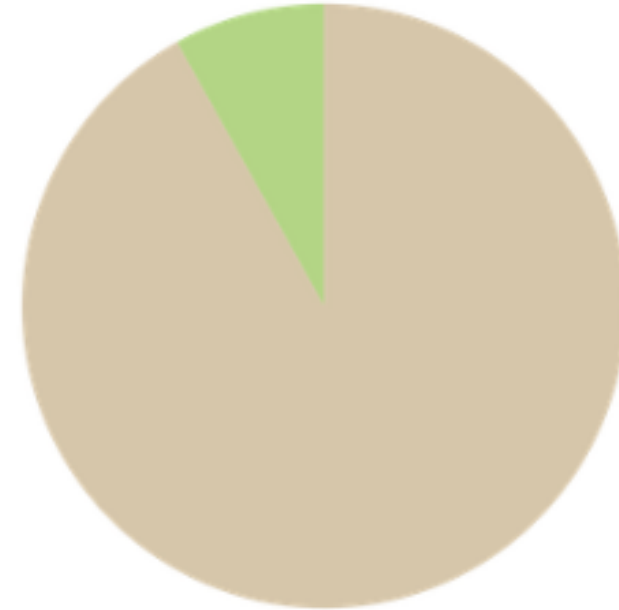


Mental health

More than a trend, a necessity



1 in 3 children have experienced anxiety and needed counseling and emotional support



8,1% have turned to counseling services

Physical health

Access to healthcare is a right, not a privilege

School infirmaries have limited hours, and access to medical services is far too reliant on parents. The lack of qualified staff and poor communication with teenagers exacerbates the issue, leaving many of us without proper care.

We want to lower the age at which teenagers can access medical services without parental consent to 14 years old, ensure free access to consultations for children, including specialized areas like dentistry and allergology, and to subsidize dental braces and allergology tests, provide meal vouchers for children with food intolerances.

Additionally, **we want** to increase the number of equipped school infirmaries with constant working hours, and introduce itinerant socio-medical services in rural communities for awareness, consultations, and treatments.



Education

Education shapes the future – every child matters

The current system faces significant challenges, including a lack of consultation with students, an excessive focus on theory and memorization, poorly trained teachers or those with outdated views, a large volume of homework and tests, and issues of discrimination and favoritism.

We want better investments in education (at least 6% of GDP) for a better implementation of the best interest of the child, ongoing training for teachers, and an anonymous feedback system for teachers.

Also, **we want** reviewing the school curriculum, digitization of education, supporting extracurricular activities, maintaining dedicated laboratories to their intended purpose, and student lockers - schools should have individual lockers, either in classrooms or in hallways.



Underage mothers

We need sex education

Every minor mother is an example of the failure of sex education and the lack of social support. Limited education about contraception and insufficient support for pregnant teenagers leave many vulnerable and unprepared.

We want to integrate sexual education programs into school curricula, tailored to different ages and social contexts, while also establishing counseling centers to provide guidance and emotional support. Free access to contraception and awareness campaigns are essential steps to empower teenagers with the knowledge and resources they need to make informed decisions.



Underage mothers

We need sex education



Romania ranks first in the European Union for underage mothers - 30% of the underage mothers in the European Union are from our country



1 in 10 newborns in Romania has a teenager mother

According to the studies from 2022

Children with disabilities

Inclusion is the key to a fair future!

Discrimination and the lack of accessible infrastructure leave children with disabilities isolated, facing differentiated treatment and limited access to essential resources.

We want inclusive activities and extracurricular events to encourage interaction between children with and without disabilities. Ensuring access ramps, elevators, and other necessary infrastructure is crucial for them.

We want clear mechanisms for obtaining CES certificates, respecting the confidentiality of their issues, and providing psychological support. These are vital steps to promote their inclusion and well-being.



Prevention of substance abuse

A message which is inspiring, not discouraging!

Adolescents are exposed to various risks, and moralizing messages are not enough. The lack of healthy alternatives and the stigmatization of substance use only worsen the situation.

We want educational sessions about risks and rehabilitation, paired with attractive recreational activities, to provide adolescents with better choices and a supportive environment.



Human trafficking

You can't put a price on someone's life

Especially in rural areas, many children fall victim to trafficking, either sexually or for labor, and their voices remain unheard. The lack of risk awareness and specialized support only deepens their vulnerability.

We want awareness campaigns to educate communities about these risks and specialized centers with qualified staff to provide essential support for victims.



Children in foster care

Childhood is not a luxury!

Thousands of children are in foster care centers, which do not ensure harmonious development. Moreover, the adoption system is cumbersome, lacking a unified practice, and there is a lack of resources to support children in such situations. The system is inefficient, and there is a significant lack of support materials.

We want a reform in the foster care system, and to allocate a larger budget, including resources for staff training.

We want increased support for youth aging out of the foster care system to help them transition into independent lives.



KEEP IN MIND

- Information and education not only among children, but also among adults working with children.
- Increasing access to counseling services without parental consent. Ensuring safe and anonymous reporting methods.
- Increasing the budget allocated to children's programs and using it efficiently. Rethinking systems with the best interests of children in mind.



CLICK TO SEE OUR MANIFESTO VIDEO

We have shared our concerns and hopes, firmly demanding that our rights be respected.



This report is the result of **Save the Children Romania's collaborative process**, in which children actively participated in:

Consultations: Engaging in discussion sessions to identify issues and priorities from their perspective.

Drafting: Fully developing the report, we clearly and systematically presented our vision, observations, and conclusions.

Visual Material: Producing a video to complement and amplify the report's messages.



Sources of information

- *A study on underage mothers and pregnant minors - research report, Save the Children Romania, 2024;*
- *National Study – Child Abuse, Save the Children Romania, 2021;*
- *Study on the incidence of violence against children, Save the Children Romania, 2021.*

