



Assessing our rights

Report based on a participation scheme with children and adolescents on the application of their rights in Spain

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Credits

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The contributions by children and adolescents contemplated in this report were made through the participation scheme organized for this purpose, systematically reflected in the document “Pasamos examen a nuestros derechos” [approx. “Let’s take a look at our rights”] (Icía Bosch Mogin. Published by Plataforma de Infancia, 2016).

Cover image

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Date of publication

February 2017

Feminine and masculine

In the Spanish version of this report, with the goal of adapting the language so as to represent both men and women, the decision has been made to use terms that are both masculine and feminine alternately, or the use of a term that although may be masculine or feminine represents all persons. However, in the English translation we understand that the language is generally gender free. When institutions or documents are mentioned, their official name in English is used where applicable.

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Acknowledgements

Plataforma de Infancia wishes to thank all the organizations involved in the preparation of this report, especially each and every one of the children and adolescents who contributed through the workshops and activities forming part of the participation scheme “Let’s take a look at our rights”. Our gratitude is extended to the technical and educational staff who accompanied them and made our work easier in all tasks requiring coordination.

To each and all of you, thank you

- ◉ **Aldeas Infantiles SOS** in Cuenca, Las Palmas, San Lorenzo de El Escorial (Madrid) and the Comprehensive Day Centres in Zaragoza, San Adrián de Besos and Montcada i Reixac in Barcelona, Azahar and Integración al Deporte in Granada; Telde, Los Realejos, La Laguna and El Tablero de Canarias; Villalba de Madrid.
- ◉ **Town Council of Belmonte de Miranda** (Asturias).
- ◉ **Town Council of Llanera** (Asturias).
- ◉ **Town Council of Lugones** (Asturias).
- ◉ **Town Council of Chinchón**. Municipal Play Centre (Madrid).
- ◉ **Cáritas Diocesana** in Zamora Centro de Apoyo al Menor CAM; Cáritas Diocesana Menorca Centre Obert Sant Francesc de Maó; Cáritas Diocesana de Valencia. Grupo Manantial. Caritas Diocesana de Barcelona Centre Obert Glamparets.
- ◉ **CEIP Ventura Rodríguez**. Ciempozuelos (Madrid).
- ◉ **CERMI** (Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities).
- ◉ **Consejo de Infancia y Adolescencia de Pola de Laviana** (Asturias).
- ◉ **Consejo de Infancia de Tineo** (Asturias).
- ◉ **Cruz Roja Juventud**: Seville, Asturias, Zamora, Ávila, Granada, Ceuta, Murcia, Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, Badajoz, Tarragona, Soria, Madrid, Ourense.
- ◉ **Federación Injucam**. Groups from Valdeperales, San Pablo, Amoverse, Jara and Chapotea (Madrid).
- ◉ **Fundación Secretariado Gitano**: Barcelona, Santander, Valladolid, Sabadell, Gijón and Madrid.
- ◉ **Fundación Aldaba**. Llar D’és Raiguer (Palma de Mallorca).
- ◉ **Fundación Amigó**. Kanguroteca [free nursery for children of the underprivileged]. (Madrid).
- ◉ **Foro de Infancia y Adolescencia del Principado de Asturias**.
- ◉ **Foro de Participación Infantil y Juvenil del Ayuntamiento de Rivas** (Madrid).
- ◉ **Fundación Balía por la Infancia**. Centro, Tetuán and Latina districts (Madrid).
- ◉ **Fundación Juan Soñador**. Connection Programme (“Programa Conexión”) (Burgos).
- ◉ **Fundación Proyecto Solidario**. Secondary schools IES Martiricos, IES Cánovas del Castillo y CEIP Blas Infante de Málaga and IES Antigua Xesi de Almuñecar (Granada).
- ◉ **Liga de la Educación y la Cultura Popular**. Ludoteca Erif (play centre) in Fuenlabrada (Madrid).
- ◉ **YMCA Spain**. Getafe, Logroño, Leganés, Madrid, Valencia.

Contents

1	Introduction	07
2	At a glance	08
3	The scheme	12
	• The scheme in figures	
4	Proposals made by the children and adolescents	19
	• General measures	
	• Non-discrimination	
	• Participation and surroundings	
	• Violence	
	• Family environment and protection	
	• Disability, health and well-being	
	• Education and play	
	• Special protection measures	
5	Bibliography	64
6	Plataforma de Infancia	65

Introduction

Plataforma de Infancia is a confederation of around sixty social organizations working for the protection, promotion and defence of children's and adolescents' rights in Spain, within the framework of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Its goals include promoting the participation and association of children through its strategy "La Infancia Opina", within which actions, activities, materials and workshops, among others, are designed to make sure that children and adolescents know and understand that they are entitled to their opinion, to express their views, to say what they think, to freedom of thought, to speak up and to take part in matters which concern them, among other issues.

In 2016, after the Spanish government had submitted its V and VI Report on the Implementation of the CRC and its Optional Protocols (OP) to the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child, Plataforma de Infancia began preparing its own report on how the rights of children and adolescents were being upheld in Spain, to supplement the government's information. Along the same lines, it considered it appropriate to promote the preparation of

this report, with the title:

"Assessing our rights"

Now, for the first time, Plataforma de Infancia presents a report expressly setting out the opinions voiced by children and adolescents on the upholding of their rights. Those opinions were collected through the participation scheme run for this purpose, so reflect their thoughts and demands.

Overall, 3,151 children and adolescents were involved in the scheme "Let's take a look at our rights", run with the collaboration of the organizations incorporated in Plataforma de Infancia, other social organizations, educational establishments, child and adolescent participation councils and other groups from different parts of the country.

With this work, we hope to make a significant contribution to the monitoring by the CRC of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, initially by making children's and adolescents' views on the matter heard through this report, but paving the way for them to inform the Committee directly, in person, of their anxieties and proposals at some later stage.

At a glance

a What is most important...

The issues on which opinions have most been expressed during the scheme are concerned with the right to participation, well-being & health and education (referring to optimum living conditions for the best development of the child).

b I have rights...

Many of the opinions voiced within the scheme reveal that most of the children and adolescents participating are aware of their fundamental rights. They understand that knowledge of their rights is the first step towards implementation. For this reason, they propose making children, adolescents and society at large aware of those rights and, more specifically, that they be included permanently in school curricula.

c My rights are upheld...

But not in the same way for all the children living in the country. Consequently, they urge governments to promote and ensure compliance with the laws giving all children access to the same rights, regardless of their social, cultural or religious situation, nationality, geographical origin, gender or disability. The rights must be equal for everyone.

d

My opinion counts...

In all areas they ask to be heard and taken into account in decision-making. This reflects how important they consider their right to speak and be heard. To implement this right, they ask to be given information in terms suited to their age and for opportunities to enable their involvement within schools, family and their local environment. They also request the creation of more opportunities and channels for involvement, linked to local authorities and environments, and the promotion of children's associations. On several occasions they have mentioned their right to respect, both in general and of their privacy. They believe that the children themselves must be responsible and not distribute personal images through the social networks.

e

Bullying at school...

This worries them and it appears in many groups. They request joint responsibility of pupils, families and the school, and more training for teachers so that they know how to deal with it.

f

My family and others...

They consider it vital for children to grow up within a family, receiving love and affection. They seek priority for adoption and fostering processes, and government assistance for families that are unable to take care of their children due to economic hardship. They are concerned that their families work too hard and do not have time to be with them.



g

I am special; I am just like the rest...

Children with disabilities who go to ordinary schools mention that teachers are not adequately trained to deal with them and that some curricular activities are not adapted to them, so they feel excluded. They also report that government aid has been reduced in recent years, hampering their integration in educational establishments.

h

My health...

They demand free healthcare, including medicines and all kinds of treatment for all children living in Spain, without discrimination and in view of the special needs of each child. They mention that there are not enough hospitals and medical staff, especially in rural areas.

i

My home...

Access to decent housing with minimum standards and facilities, such as heating, sanitation and adequate space, is mentioned by many children in connection with well-being. They ask the government to promote aids and laws to ensure that all families have somewhere to live, such as affordable housing and social housing.

j

My school...

Their greatest concern is the excessive homework they are given, which does not leave them any free time to play or be with their families. They would like schools with renovated facilities and free materials and resources, where lessons are more motivating and practical, and where their opinions are taken into account. They consider their classes too large and point to the need for more teaching staff. They also want quality education for all children and adolescents, and fewer changes in the education laws, which always require time and effort to adapt.

k

My neighbourhood, my village, my town...

They want a clean world, taking care of the environment. They go to public parks to meet their friends, but say that the facilities are dirty and in bad condition, and are often not safe. There are not enough drinking fountains or public toilets. Older children say parks are for smaller children and that more free sports and cultural activities should be offered as an alternative to drinking in the streets.

l

Solidarity...

They are keenly aware of what happens in their society to children in the most vulnerable situations, for whom they request aids and campaigns to encourage others to put themselves in the position of those people and help them.

The scheme

In 2016, through its strategy “La Infancia Opina”, Plataforma de Infancia set up a children’s participation scheme to give children aged 6-17 living in Spain an opportunity to know and analyse their rights and make proposals to improve their immediate environment (family, school, neighbourhood, village or town) and thereby contribute towards improving the implementation of their rights in Spanish society.

After the call for participants, the scheme ran for four months, from September to December 2016 and January 2017, inclusive. A number of resources were generated, aimed at the different groups of participants:

- ◉ A video informing them of the scheme and encouraging them to participate.
- ◉ The methodology guidelines **Let’s take a look at our rights:** a tool aimed at the educators accompanying the groups of children and adolescents.
- ◉ Distribution of copies of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adapted for different age groups (6-8; 9-13 and 13-17).
- ◉ Holding of workshops entitled **Our rights come on stage**, using the forum theatre technique, a creative dynamic that favours the transformation of reality, where everyday situations are depicted through theatre, seeking solutions with spontaneous participation by the public.

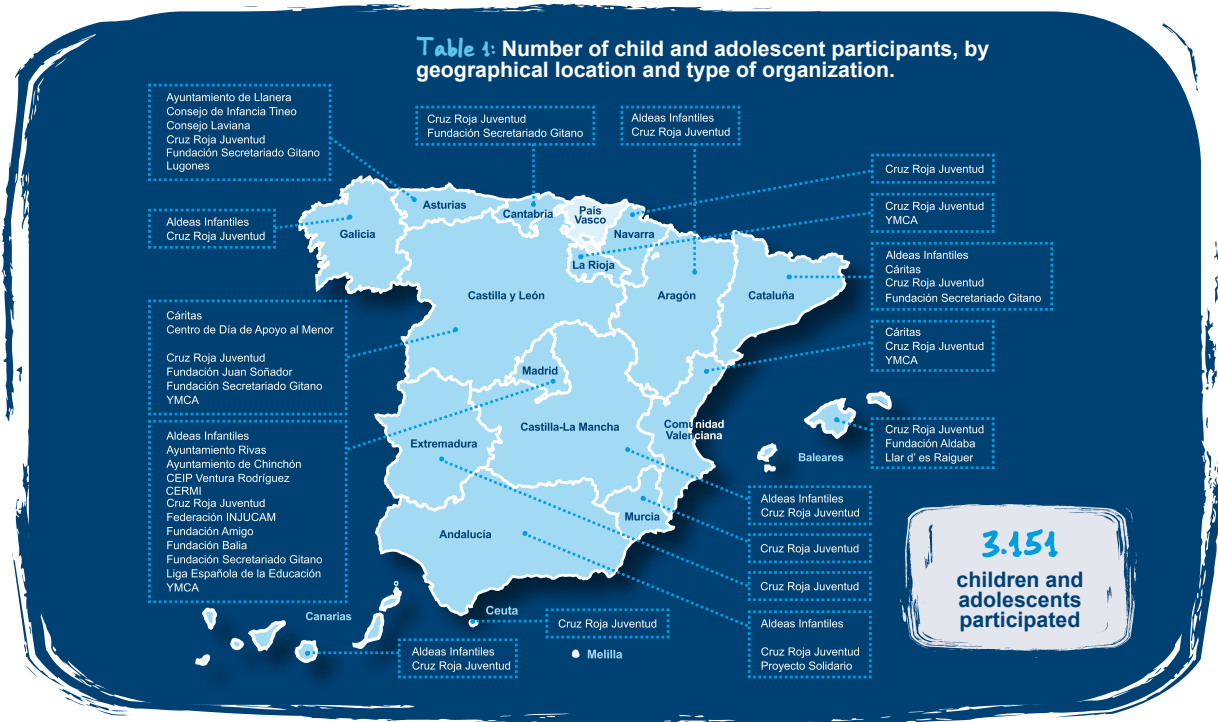
A sample of the results of that scheme were presented by a group of children and adolescents to the authorities responsible for designing the child-related policies at an institutional event held to commemorate Universal Children’s Day, organized by Plataforma de Infancia on 18 November 2016 with the collaboration of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. However, the scheme continued up to January 2017 for preparation of the Report, incorporating the conclusions of some groups who participated after that date.

After submitting this Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Plataforma de Infancia will begin the process to facilitate the participation of a group of children and adolescents in the forthcoming sessions of the Committee, to be held in Geneva (Switzerland) in May-June 2017, so that they can directly represent the voices of all the children included here.

The scheme in figures

Who participated?

3,151 children took part in this scheme, through 22 organizations, involving more than 190 groups from educational establishments, social organizations and child and adolescent participation councils from practically all over Spain.



The organizations participating were mainly Children's Associations, but also Local Councils, Educational Establishments and Child and Adolescent Participation Councils:

Table 2: Type of organization/institution the participants were from

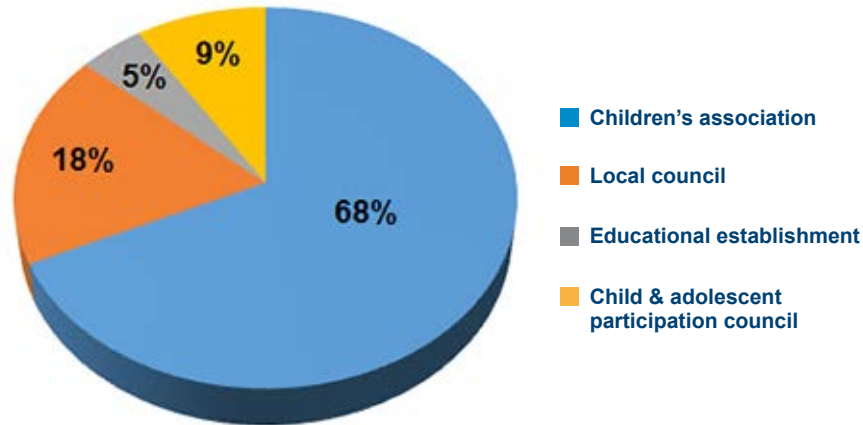


Chart based on "Pasemos examen a nuestros derechos" Iciar Bosch. Plataforma de Infancia

Profile of participants

Territory: Groups participated from 57 locations and 26 provinces, through their local councils, making it possible to obtain proposals from children and adolescents who live in the rural environment.

Gender: The general distribution was even, with slightly more girls. However, most of the proposals included in the spreadsheets (958) were made by groups, with a much smaller proportion of individual proposals, 81 of which were made by girls and 57 by boys.

Age: Although the methodology was aimed mainly at children and adolescents aged 9-17, it was adaptable for other age groups, so children and adolescents aged 3-17 were able to participate.

Social background: We achieved a broad, diverse participation involving different organizations and institutions working with children in different situations. We were thus able to include proposals from children and adolescents at risk of exclusion, both those who live with their families and those in institutional care, children with disabilities and gypsy children.

Areas of concern

Through the activities planned, developed and adapted to the participants, numerous proposals were generated on different subject matters. Those that aroused most interest were, in this order, Participation and surroundings, Well-being and Education.

Table 3: Areas of concern expressed by children and adolescents

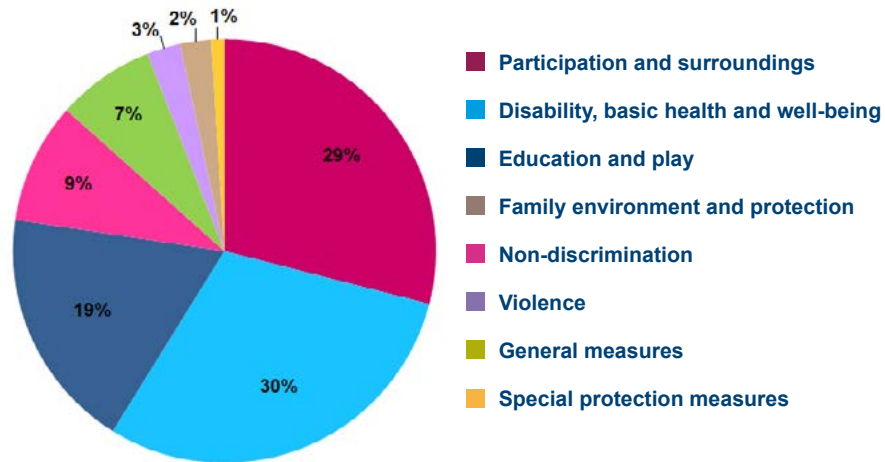


Chart based on "Pasemos examen a nuestros derechos" Iciar Bosch. Plataforma de Infancia

The matter of participation is a recurring concern among the participants, demonstrated by the large number of proposals and opinions on the issue, both in the section on participation and across the board.

Type of action

In view of the disparity of proposals submitted, they were further classified according to the type of action promoted. The new classification criteria include the following options:

<i>Rights of the Child:</i>	proposal focused on the recognition of an existing right
<i>Children's responsibility:</i>	proposal referring to children's responsibility or obligation with regard to a right
<i>Complaint:</i>	proposal identifying a right that is being violated
<i>Local demand:</i>	call for action regarding an issue falling within the competence of local government or bodies
<i>National demand:</i>	call for action regarding an issue falling within the competence of regional or national government or bodies
<i>International demand:</i>	call for action regarding an issue falling within the competence of the States Parties to the Convention
<i>Collective action:</i>	call for action requiring the collaboration of all sectors of society

Chart based on "Pasemos examen a nuestros derechos" Iciar Bosch. Plataforma de Infancia



Thanks to the participation of numerous groups and the flexibility of the methods and formats adaptable to the reality of each group, we have been able to collect a large number of opinions from children presented in different formats: 1.097 proposals based on 39 spreadsheets, 400 photographs, 19 videos and 35 drawings. These proposals were systematized and categorized, as far as possible, according to the criteria proposed by the Committee.

To assist reading and understanding of this report, a representative selection of the proposals is taken, which sum up the reflections and demands of all the participants on the implementation of their rights, arranged by subject matter.



General measures

General measures

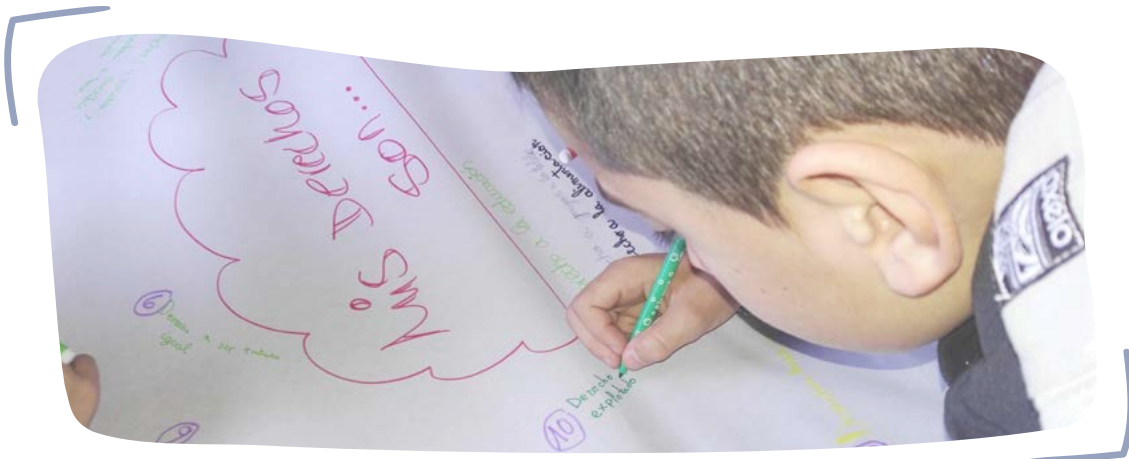
"Institutions must really implement children's rights"

Group proposal
Children and adolescents aged 6-13
Cruz Roja Juventud



What have we seen?

- Everyone has a duty to implement the rights.
- We are entitled to have a lawyer.
- International aid is not respected.
- We don't want borders between countries.



What do we propose?



- ◉ We should receive help to understand and exercise our rights.
- ◉ The State should respect and support parents.
- ◉ Demand that the government invest more in education and healthcare.
- ◉ Set up a platform for us to communicate with public institutions, where children and adolescents can express their needs and opinions or report any infringement of our rights.
- ◉ To change the situation, people have to demonstrate and speak out to say what they think, and they don't like doing it. Demonstrations are held to get the people who make the laws and have the power to change things -like councils, politicians and prime ministers- to listen.
- ◉ Social housing.
- ◉ Participate in international cooperation projects to help children from other countries through solidarity markets.
- ◉ We want a stable, secular, public education law.
- ◉ The government has to protect us all.
- ◉ The laws should be changed (school things should be free).
- ◉ The right to equality (racial and sexual) should be better protected, as should the right to diversity, both cultural and functional (be seen as something, without discrimination or pity).
- ◉ Politicians should go to places where there are children to talk to them and ask what they need (schools, parks, neighbourhoods, etc.).
- ◉ Increase aids to families, especially for food, for example, by creating coupons so that families who cannot wash their clothes at home can go to a local launderette.
- ◉ Demand more doctors and nurses from the government.



Analysis



The participants in the scheme have pointed out that although children's rights are implemented in Spain for many of them, they do not all have equal rights for access to education, healthcare and resources in general, or in all situations, as they do not always feel protected, for example, against violence or abuse. They also report that they have few real opportunities to participate and that adults generally do not take their opinions into account.

They consider it very important for both adults and children to know their rights and be committed to their implementation. On the one hand, they want politicians and those responsible for children to apply the laws, grant aids and comply with international treaties favouring the implementation of children's rights in different areas. On the other hand, they want the society at large, and children in particular, to be committed to making those rights effective for all of them.

In this section we can see where their greatest interests lie: they express concern over the instability of laws on education and the lack of funds for schools and healthcare. They also worry about the vulnerable situations of many people, unemployment and lack of housing being issues that come up time and again. In all areas, they claim their right to speak and be heard, by those around them and by politicians.





2

Non-discrimination

Non-discrimination

“Intercultural schools. They will enable us to get to know other cultures and get rid of misconceptions we have of people and cultures we do not know. We don't like schools where there are only gypsies and immigrants”

Group proposal
Children and adolescents aged 11-16
Fundación Secretariado Gitano



What have we seen?

- ◉ We are all equal because we are all children.
- ◉ In our country, boys and girls do not have the same rights. Boys have more rights than girls and that makes me cross, because here in Spain we are all equal.
- ◉ Boys and girls are equal and we can all play the same things.
- ◉ We have a right to be homosexual.
- ◉ We are all entitled to have a name and be able to be identified wherever we might go for different reasons.



What do we propose?

- To prevent discrimination against someone, put yourself in their shoes and try to convince the group you are in that we are all equal.
- No child should suffer discrimination because of their race.
- Boys and girls should be treated equally, in the same way.
- Run awareness campaigns about different religions and cultures (for example, to avoid confusing Islam with terrorism).
- There should be no schools attended only by gypsies.
- Teachers should listen to us when we have discrimination problems with our classmates.
- We should not be misjudged; people should not think that all gypsies are thieves.
- We would like girls rights to be respected, as they have more complicated circumstances.
- Special children are entitled to learn, play and participate just like the rest and we must not laugh at them or make fun of them.
- We propose not despising people because they are different.
- We should not look at people who do not fit in, but act and draw them in.
- Let children who suffer discrimination into our group of friends.
- Let boys play with Barbies without anyone poking fun at them.
- There should not be any “illegal” people.
- We should call people by their names, not by rude nicknames.
- People should make an effort to learn names, even when they are foreign and difficult to pronounce.
- Non-discrimination and inclusion of children with disabilities.
- Healthcare for all children and adolescents, regardless of their legal status in the country.
- All children should feel loved, regardless of their social, economic, cultural or any other condition.



Analysis



The children believe that all children have access to the same rights on equal terms. They are especially concerned about the situation of children with disabilities and those who are not in Spain legally. They also complain that there are some schools with an overwhelming majority of immigrants and gypsies, which does not help their real integration in the community.

As regards gender equality, they think everything is more difficult for girls than for boys. They do not like the fact that there are still activities and games associated with one specific sex and that a boy or girl may be abused for wanting to participate in different games.

The subject of sexual diversity has also come up, as boys and girls in this situation suffer discrimination and want their rights to be protected. Although more visibility has been given to this issue in recent years, there is still discrimination among the younger members of society.

Children and adolescents demand laws to make people respect the rights of all of them without discrimination and want adults to listen when those rights are violated. However, they also believe that they themselves have a very important role to play in the integration of all children, in not endorsing acts of discrimination at school or with their friends and defending the children who suffer such acts.



3

Participation and
surroundings

Participation and surroundings

“Right to freedom, to being able to choose and speak up.
The right to be heard”

Proposal
Teenage girl aged 14
Asociación YMCA

“We want concerts and healthy leisure activities,
free or at a low cost, so that we are not
hanging out in parks smoking and drinking alcohol”

Group proposal
Children and adolescents aged 11-14
Cruz Roja Juventud - IES Doctor Pedro Guillén

What have we seen?

- ◉ Our rights are not respected in Spain when children are not allowed to express their opinion on matters that affect them.
- ◉ We do not enjoy the right of association.
- ◉ We do not enjoy the right to free expression.
- ◉ We are not entitled to vote in elections.
- ◉ We do not enjoy the right to quality information.
- ◉ You learn to participate by participating!



- ◉ Sometimes our right to respect is not upheld when we make a mistake that we could put right.
- ◉ Your rights are not respected when your photo is taken without your permission.
- ◉ We do not always enjoy the right to personal space.
- ◉ We do not always enjoy the right to privacy.
- ◉ Our right to privacy is often ignored by parents who want to know absolutely everything when we are young.

What do we propose?

Participation

- ◉ Adults must take our opinions into account and listen to our views on things that affect us (education, leisure, friends).
- ◉ A suggestion box for everyone to have freedom of expression.
- ◉ We ask the authorities to take us into account.
- ◉ More child and adolescent participation groups should be set up in all towns and villages, as they give us an opportunity to be heard.
- ◉ We can create associations and hold meetings.
- ◉ We want to be able to speak up whenever we like or do not like the things we are offered and activities we are signed up for.
- ◉ All children should be able to choose what we want to do, for example, deciding what extracurricular activities I want to do and not be forced to do what my mother chooses.
- ◉ Take our opinion into account when planning activities and outings, both at home and at school.
- ◉ Adults should tell us things and not shout at us.
- ◉ We are entitled to choose how we want our hair.



- ◉ We are entitled to decorate our rooms how we like.
- ◉ We demand our right to an answer.
- ◉ We should not always have to do what adults tell us to do, because we have freedom, we can speak up and reach agreements with the grown-ups.
- ◉ We are entitled to privacy and to protection from the law.
- ◉ Social networks make you lose part of your privacy and that is our responsibility. We should not post certain photos and allow them circulate freely on internet.

Surroundings

- ◉ We want benches in the neighbourhood where we can play, with a roof for when it rains.
- ◉ Toilets in parks, and fountains, and some of the existing ones should be done up because they are not in very good condition.
- ◉ There should be separate areas in the park for children over 10.
- ◉ We would like to have more parks with climbing facilities, ropes and skate parks, because most parks are designed for small children.
- ◉ We would like to have more recreational areas for youths, where we can do different activities without being afraid that something might happen.
- ◉ There should be more police keeping an eye on areas where there are children so that we feel safe.
- ◉ We want more security in the streets, because cars go very fast.
- ◉ People should pick up their dog mess.
- ◉ Less pollution.
- ◉ We would like to have somewhere to grow fruit and vegetables; we like that idea very much.
- ◉ We want somewhere where we can paint graffiti and people can see what we draw.
- ◉ I would like goalposts and basketball baskets in the square in my neighbourhood.

Analysis



Numerous proposals have been received regarding the right to participate and be heard. This is clearly a fundamental issue for children and adolescents, being mentioned in all the areas analysed.

They ask adults to take their views into account at home, at school and in their local communities. They have a very positive opinion of the child and adolescent participation bodies and municipal participation councils, in which some of them are involved, but they say there are not many and ask for more to be set up, on local, regional and national levels. Young people are also demanding the right to vote at 16.

They explain the importance of being well informed in order to permit their involvement in everything that concerns them. Consequently, they demand comprehensible information from doctors, teachers and the media, and request adequate spaces where they can meet and share this information.

Views have also been expressed on the lack of protection of privacy in social networks and the media. They mention the right to more privacy at home, where they believe this is not always respected. This concern is mainly expressed by teenagers, while younger children mention this far less and normally with regard to social networks. The children consider themselves primarily responsible for protecting their image in the social networks, by being careful with what they post and respecting others.

As regards their surroundings, they propose joint responsibility for taking care of the environment and are concerned about the state of some facilities for small children in parks and recreation areas, as they are in poor condition and not always safe, due to a shortage of funds. They propose spaces set aside for them, which might motivate them and where they can participate through their creativeness, and they urge the government to provide free or low-cost sports and cultural activities as a safe, healthy alternative for adolescent recreation.



Violence

Violence

"Children and young people should be taught how to love themselves, how to communicate with others to solve problems in a civilised manner and how to respect oneself and others"

Group proposal
Children and adolescents aged 12-17
Consejo Municipal de Infancia y Adolescencia, Laviana (Asturias)



What have we seen?

- ◉ If you suffer abuse, you feel bad because people have lied to you and hurt you.
- ◉ We have no protection from ill-treatment and abuse.
- ◉ Hitting someone who ill-treats others is not a good solution (violence is not eliminated with more violence).

What do we propose?

- ◉ Stop physical and psychological bullying at school and cyberbullying.
- ◉ Bullying should be taken more seriously.
- ◉ I don't want anyone to be hit at school.
- ◉ Parents should agree to talk to their children in cases of bullying and get their children to make up.
- ◉ Parents and teachers should talk when a child is bullied.
- ◉ We must stand up for classmates when someone insults or hits them; that is not right.
- ◉ There should be mediators for conflicts at school.



- ◉ There should be more control, security and information at schools to prevent bullying.
- ◉ We should ignore bullies.
- ◉ When one child attacks another, they should be separated and helped to listen to each other.
- ◉ An anti-fight association should be created.
- ◉ Someone close to the abuser could make them change their attitude by warning them of the negative consequences for them.
- ◉ The police or other adults should be asked to help in situations of exploitation or neglect.
- ◉ Adults should not shout at children or hit them.
- ◉ I propose making rules for bullies who hit others to be watched closely so that they do not do it again.
- ◉ We should seek help from adults, teachers, the Red Cross, parents or police when an adult hits a child.
- ◉ Parents should keep a closer watch on their children because of the danger of sexual abuse and harassment.
- ◉ (Take measures to help) Make bullies sympathise with others.

Analysis

Children's greatest concern in this area is bullying, as this directly affects them or their classmates. To deal with this situation, children ask for union and collaboration among themselves, their families and teachers and for teachers to listen when they report cases of bullying. They also consider it very important for teachers to receive training in the solving of conflicts and propose that children act as mediators in the dispute, which is already done at some schools, although they say that not all bullying occurs at school. They also ask for political measures for solving these problems to be adopted or revised and for more surveillance at schools.

Finally, they report violence committed against them by adults and propose more surveillance and protection.





5

Family environment
and protection

Family environment and protection

"Families should have more aids so that children do not have to live without their parents"

Group proposal
Children and adolescents aged 10-17
Aldeas Infantiles SOS España



What have we seen?

- ◉ We should all have a family to protect us and give us love, confidence and security.
- ◉ We are entitled to foster and adoption homes.
- ◉ For some years now, many families and children have needed (State) aid to be able to exercise their rights in Spain.
- ◉ I have a right to be with my daddy, mummy, brothers and sisters.
- ◉ Adolescents are worried that there are no jobs for our parents, making it difficult for them to have enough money to buy school material, books, clothes, dentist appointments or glasses.
- ◉ In the mornings, I have to get up on my own, get my own breakfast and catch the bus on my own.
- ◉ Every member of the family must accept their responsibilities and sometimes we have responsibilities that do not correspond to our age. We should be playing.

What do we propose?

- ◉ Parents should have more time to play with and look after their children.
- ◉ I want to live with my family and for them to look after me, feed me and, above all, love me.
- ◉ All children should have people who love them, a house to live in and someone to listen to them.
- ◉ Families should be helped so that they don't have to abandon their children.
- ◉ Foster families should be encouraged.
- ◉ Parents should be told to listen to us and take some notice of us.
- ◉ Families should be informed of children's rights.
- ◉ All children should have the right to be adopted into a family.
- ◉ If your family is not with you, they should receive assistance.
- ◉ We have a right not to be left alone at home for very long.
- ◉ Our parents have equal responsibilities for our education and development.
- ◉ Our parents should receive benefits if they work in support services.
- ◉ We all have a right to be with our parents, provided they do their duty.
- ◉ We should receive aids if our parents have no money.
- ◉ Our parents should finish work earlier.
- ◉ See our parents and our brothers and sisters more.





Analysis



The participants associate their families mainly with care and growing up with love and affection and they complain that not all children enjoy that right. They believe that institutions should provide assistance and see that all children can live with their families and/or in foster homes, especially promoting fostering and adoption processes. It worries them that some families are forced to give their children up for adoption because of economic hardship and ask for more aids to be given so that this does not happen.

Their contributions and opinions also reflect the situation endured by some families during the economic crisis in Spain, referring directly to that time and their concern for the shortage of jobs for their families and the need for parents to work long hours, making it difficult for them to spend time with their children and establish a decent work-life balance.

Finally, in this area, too, they demand that their opinion be taken into account in family decisions.





6

Disability, health
and well-being

Disability, health and well-being

"Teachers don't know how to deal with children with disabilities. They are not prepared for this"

Proposal
Teenage girl aged 17
Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI)

"Right to decent housing: many children do not enjoy this right"

Group proposal
Children aged 10-12
Cáritas Española

48

Disability



What have we seen?

- ◉ Children with disabilities are entitled to manage by ourselves.
- ◉ There are not enough aids. They have been reduced.
- ◉ Teachers do not adapt assessments to the needs of children with disabilities. For example, "the listening test is difficult for me; if the teacher read the text out, I could read her lips".
- ◉ When we tell teachers that the assessment is not adapted to our needs, they do not listen and just say, "that's the way it is".

- ⦿ School outings and physical education lessons are not adapted for us (girl with disability).
- ⦿ There used to be a person who helped me in class when I didn't understand the lesson, but now there's nobody (girl with disability).
- ⦿ There was a fire drill at our school and another boy and I, both with reduced mobility, were told not to take part.

What do we propose?



- ⦿ No children with motor disabilities should encounter problems for going to school. Think how we would feel if we couldn't go to the school we wanted to go to...
- ⦿ Eliminate barriers so that wheelchairs can move freely.
- ⦿ More information must be given on our condition (to teachers and classmates) so that we can become more integrated.

Analysis

Children with disabilities participating in the workshops say they particularly suffer the consequences of the cutbacks in funds and aids.

They demand the elimination of structural barriers at school and complain about the lack of preparation of the teaching staff in how to deal with them, especially in primary education, and the school curriculum with regard to outings and certain lessons. To help children with disabilities to participate more, they propose giving more information to adults (teachers) and other children on their condition, as they believe this would help their integration in society. They also request more support, aids and political measures.



Health

What have we seen?



- ◉ We are worried that some children cannot receive medicine because their parents do not have access.
- ◉ There are many cuts at hospitals; many beds have been lost.
- ◉ There are not enough aids. They have been cut back.
- ◉ We are entitled to protection from drugs.

What do we propose?

- ◉ Make hospital more attractive, decorated with our favourite drawings.
- ◉ Every child should have free healthcare and there should be aids for families who cannot buy medicine for their children.
- ◉ More doctors and nurses in hospitals, so we don't have to wait if we are very ill.
- ◉ The paediatrician should talk to us in a way that we can understand.
- ◉ Let patients with healthcare cards help others who don't have them, so that the doctors will see them (referring to people "without papers").
- ◉ Call the social services if we see a sick child who is not taken to the doctor's.
- ◉ Have a doctor all day in my village so that we don't have to go to the next village.
- ◉ If we are sick, we have a right to go to the doctor's and be treated just the same as adults.
- ◉ Vaccinations for all children.



- ⦿ Not only talks at school; more intervention and the talks should be given by children or adolescents who have had problems with alcohol and drugs, as that would be more convincing and true, telling us what they have experienced.
- ⦿ Accompany and respect children in that situation without labelling them.



Analysis

In this area, they complain about cuts in funding and the shortage of hospitals and medical staff, especially in the rural environment. They want free, universal healthcare that does not exclude any child from receiving healthcare, regardless of their legal situation in the country or the lack of money in their families to pay for medicines and vaccinations. Just as in other areas, they claim their right to information, requesting doctors to talk directly to them in terms suited to their age.

Finally, they believe that the law on alcohol consumption does not solve the problem, as young people have access to drink, there is no control. However, they believe that families have an important role to play, talking to their children and guiding them, even if the parents have to step in.

Well-being



What have we seen?

- ⦿ We do not enjoy the right to a grant.
- ⦿ The right to food is not ensured.
- ⦿ The right to dignity is not protected.
- ⦿ The right to be happy is not guaranteed.

What do we propose?

- ◉ Having a home and good food and living in conditions of well-being and healthy development.
- ◉ We have a right to eat three times a day.
- ◉ Right to eat everything.
- ◉ We believe that children can also save lives.
- ◉ There should be more solidarity campaigns to help other children so that they can eat and go to school.
- ◉ Increase the number of soup kitchens in the neighbourhood.
- ◉ Measures to find employment for underprivileged families who are receiving aids should be given priority by local councils.
- ◉ Companies should provide more money for housing.
- ◉ High wages / decent wages.
- ◉ Lower the price of food.
- ◉ Re-use second-hand toys.
- ◉ Make sure all children have decent housing.
- ◉ People with a lot of money feel happy and can buy the things they need. If I had a lot of money, I would give it to the poor. I propose that they give aids to people who need them.
- ◉ More help to get through hard times.
- ◉ We propose being more loving with one another to be happier.
- ◉ Receive hugs and affection.
- ◉ Social housing with affordable prices.



Analysis



The economic crisis has hit Spanish society hard, especially affecting children, who bear it very much in mind. The issues on which children have expressed greatest concern are the shortage of jobs and access to housing for all children, in adequate conditions for their full, happy growth and development. They have expressed many views and proposals related to these problems that they have observed in children living in the country, especially regarding the right to housing, a very sensitive issue also because of all the evictions taking place and their media coverage.

To solve this problem, children and adolescents propose promoting affordable social housing for families who cannot pay for a house; passing laws to put an end to energy poverty, so that they do not freeze in winter; and access by all children and their families to full, healthy food every day. They think the State should give more aids in this respect. They ask society for more solidarity with those who have very little and urge children and adolescents to participate in voluntary actions and campaigns.





Education and play

Education and play

"We want less homework so that we have more time to play"

Group proposal
Children aged 6-11
Asociación YMCA

What have we seen?



- The right to more freedom of expression in class is not respected.
- We have too much homework and too many exams.
- We have too many lessons a day.
- Children are concerned that some classmates do not have any books to study. Your rights are not fulfilled when you have no books to study.
- In this country, our rights are not respected when a child wants to study a vocational course but can't, because there are no places left in state education and they cannot afford to go to a private school.
- Rights are not respected in Spain when someone is being bullied and you are told, "it's just things kids do".
- We study things we don't consider useful.
- Shortage of school material, which makes it difficult to enjoy education.
- A message for all teachers, "Don't you think you talk too much in class and don't let us children participate?"
- We think a lot of young people, including gypsies, drop out of school because they are tired of studying or because they don't like what they are studying.

What do we propose?

- ◉ Don't give us so much homework.
- ◉ The government should have more trust in teachers.
- ◉ We want more teachers in the classrooms.
- ◉ We would like to study our rights in greater depth at secondary school.
- ◉ Politicians should walk the way some children have to go to school on a wet day to see how important school buses are.
- ◉ We want schools to be safe, as we can get badly hurt: broken lamps, old and badly built playgrounds.
- ◉ More free extracurricular activities.
- ◉ There are children from several different religions at school. We want classes for all of them.
- ◉ We don't want global final exams ('reválidas'). Or we want to be able to choose freely whether we do the final exams.
- ◉ Right to stable education.
- ◉ Free school meals.
- ◉ Improve the quality of school meals.
- ◉ Smaller classes.
- ◉ Free books available from the beginning of the school year.
- ◉ We want to attend the meetings organized by the school to decide what activities we are going to do.
- ◉ We should be consulted when organizing playgrounds.
- ◉ We want to participate to choose extracurricular activities and projects.



- ◉ We have a right to choose outings.
- ◉ Let pupils choose the meals on special occasions.
- ◉ Adapt teaching at schools to the new technologies, to make learning more motivating.
- ◉ Less theory and more practical, less homework and more group work.
- ◉ Have more leisure activities.
- ◉ Distribute areas and times so that all ages can use the playground, because the older children do not let the younger children play.
- ◉ Take measures so that fewer young people drop out of secondary education.
- ◉ Get rid of the teachers who are always scolding us.
- ◉ Learn while playing.
- ◉ Right to higher education.
- ◉ Lower the prices of leisure activities (theatre, cinema, amusement parks, etc.).
- ◉ Free or low-cost access to sports centres.
- ◉ There should be more activities designed for us.
- ◉ More free leisure activities during the summer holidays.





Analysis

Another of the topics that has generated most proposals is the right to education at school and leisure and free time. A large majority of the views and proposals collected complain of excessive homework, asking for less homework so that they have time to rest and play.

They are also concerned about the shortage of funds for schools, leading to insufficient teachers, failure to renovate or replace facilities and furniture, and unequal access to education for all children. In this regard, they claim free education for all children, where books and materials, school meals and school transport where necessary are free, thus giving children an opportunity when their families are unable to pay for them.

Their views reflect a very authoritarian education, with teachers who scold them a lot and few practical classes, which they don't find motivating. They would like teachers to listen to them more, and they would like to learn with more dynamic techniques and games, including new technologies in their lessons.

They complain that the continual changes in education laws have an adverse effect on them, with constant changes in curricula, books and materials. They propose a more stable law. In particular, they complain that the global, final exams have been imposed without consulting them. They do not feel that people listen to them at school either. They would like to be able to make proposals regarding the curriculum and the activities they do, among other things.

Finally, they are concerned about the growing dropout rate from school, especially among adolescents.





Special protection measures

Special protection measures

"All children should be able to go to school, wherever they come from, because education is very important for people. Borders should be opened, because there are thousands of refugee children who can't go to school"

Group proposal
Children and adolescents aged 13 and 14
Fundación Proyecto Solidario



What have we seen?

- ◉ I also came to Spain in a boat from Morocco and I think everyone has a right to travel and choose where they want to be and live.
- ◉ Nowadays, many children and adolescents are unable to enjoy many things that they should be offered. Children do not choose where or how they are born, yet many of them are at a disadvantage in comparison with others, in several aspects.
- ◉ Some children live in tents, although they have toys and are cheerful.
- ◉ I often see children on the TV who travel by sea in very rickety boats. That is very dangerous and they always die or are very ill when they arrive.
- ◉ The right to protection from aggression is not always respected.
- ◉ The inequalities between children in the world are not fair.
- ◉ The right to live without terrorism is not respected.
- ◉ The right to protection from child labour and harmful work (other children from other countries) is not upheld.

What do we propose?

- ◉ Greater control in areas where there is child labour, providing schools to give them an education and meet their needs.
- ◉ Respect for the right not to be exploited.
- ◉ Help children who suffer abuse.
- ◉ If any of us are forced to leave the country, we have a right to protection and to receive assistance in the host country.
- ◉ No more wars or hunger in the world.
- ◉ Closer, more accessible schools for all children throughout the world.
- ◉ Boost cooperation projects in parts of the world where there are fewer resources, so that children can enjoy these rights.
- ◉ We would like to help other children who are suffering because of wars and whose rights are not being respected.
- ◉ We have a right to a lawyer.
- ◉ Marriage between adults and children should not be legal in any country.
- ◉ When there are problems, they should not be solved through war and bombs.
- ◉ State schools are necessary for all children, especially in regions where children are recruited as soldiers.
- ◉ In some countries, such as Brazil, there are children who don't go to school, so their right to education is not being implemented.



Analysis

In this area, participants made proposals in respect of children who are especially vulnerable and need special protection measures. Throughout the entire scheme, the children and adolescents demonstrated considerable solidarity with families and children who emigrate to other countries, including Spain, in search of peace or freedom. Accordingly, they demand that governments let these children into the country and ensure that their rights are upheld, regardless of their origin or legal situation.

Other issues of concern include the protection of children who have suffered abuse or who are forced to marry at an early age or to fight in armed conflicts.

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Plataforma de Infancia (Spanish Child Rights Coalition)

We are an alliance of non-profit making organizations with a plural, democratic and independent nature from a political and religious point of view, which was legally established in 1997 with the aim of joining the forces of national organizations that work with children and creating a space for coordination that would promote initiatives in favour of children and adolescents in Spain.

The reference framework of the Platform of Childhood is the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Convention was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 20th of November 1989, to protect the rights of all human being under 18, and considers that they should not be treated as objects of charity but rather as individuals with rights and specific interests.

Our mission

Through the joint work of social organizations throughout Spain, we protect, promote and defend the rights of children and adolescents in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

What do we do?

We give a stronger voice to childhood organizations in their dealings with Public Administrations and society in general, contributing to the design of policies aimed at the welfare of children.

We raise general awareness in society in terms of knowledge of and respect for the rights of children.

We strengthen the associative nature of childhood organizations and reinforce the relations between member organizations, other organizations and networks of associative movements.

Through coordination and inter-association participation, we contribute to the construction of Regional Platforms of Childhood.

We are involved in the design of childhood policies on an international level through our participation in different key spaces in the European Union and Latin America.

Our values

EQUALITY for all.

Promotion of child **PARTICIPATION** in different stages of development.

COOPERATION between social organizations to join forces to achieve their objectives.

Professional and ethical **COMMITMENT** to carrying out job properly.

TRANSPARENCY and **RESPONSIBILITY** in the financial control and administration of resources.

SENSITIVITY towards any actions that violate the rights of children.

QUALITY in the implementation of programmes and services.

Member Organizations



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We are an association made up of social organizations dedicated to children.

We are a nonprofit organization and declared of public good.

We are plural, supportive, democratic and independent of any political or religious organization.

Their voice is ours

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