

Netzwerk **Kinderrechte** Schweiz
 Réseau suisse des **droits de l'enfant**
 Rete svizzera **diritti del bambino**
Child Rights Network Switzerland

Children and young people in Switzerland have a right to voice their opinion

Children's Rights Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

DOJ Dachverband Offene Kinder- und Jugendberbeit Schweiz
AFAJ Association fédérale suisse pour l'animation enfance et jeunesse en milieu ouvert

SAJV Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Jugendverbände
CSAJ Conseil Suisse des Associations de Jeunesse
 Federazione Svizzera delle Associazioni Giovanili
 Federazione Svizzera dei Gruppi di Giovani

PfCH Pflege- und Adoptivkinder Schweiz

KINDERLOBBY SCHWEIZ
 LOBBY SUISSE DE L'ENFANT
 LOBBY SVIZZERA DEL FANCIULLO

Stiftung Kinderdorf Pestalozzi



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Save the Children



Kinderschutz Schweiz
 Protection de l'enfance Suisse
 Protezione dell'infanzia Svizzera

The project is supported by the Swiss Child Protection Foundation and the Federal Social Insurance Office in accordance with Art. 10 of the Child and Youth Promotion Act (KJFG).

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Page 6 Pestalozzi Children's Foundation/Children's Conference 2020
Page 9 Commission des jeunes du canton de Vaud (Youth Parliament of the Canton of Vaud)
Page 12/13 Save the Children Switzerland in collaboration with ORS Group Switzerland.
Page 20 Pestalozzi Children's Foundation/Children's Conference 2019
Page 28 Pestalozzi Children's Foundation/Children's Conference 2019
Page 34 Federal Youth Session 2019. Copyright © Indra_Crittin
Page 36 Stiftung Kinderdorf Pestalozzi/Kinderkonferenz 2019
Page 38/39 Katrin Meier, Commission for Education, Training and Science of the Association of Public Service Employees VPOD, 2020
Page 48/49 Youth Work Centre « Jeunesse de la Côte », Peseux
Page 50 Stiftung Kinderdorf Pestalozzi/Kinderkonferenz 2020

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Children can be very loud - and yet far too often they are not heard!

The Convention on the Rights of the Child grants children and young people the right to be heard and to participate. They should be taken seriously and respected as persons. Where decisions are made about children and adolescents, their well-being must be in the focus, and wherever decisions are made about their living conditions, they must be heard and allowed to participate in decision-making.

More than twenty years after the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, there is still a need for action in Switzerland: Too often, adult decision-makers focus on the needs of children instead of their rights. In this way of thinking, the participation of children and adolescents in all areas of social life remains desirable, but at the same time optional.

On the other hand, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is based on an unconditional approach to children's rights: a child has the right to participate in every aspect of his or her life. This is especially true where they are directly affected by decisions made by adults. Because the participation of children and young people is still not implemented in all areas, it is essential to persistently take up this issue. With this in mind, I sincerely thank all those who have contributed to this report.

I am convinced that we must continue to make every effort to advance the realization of children's rights for every child in everyday life, which is already codified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Together - government, economy, society and all of us - we can all make Switzerland a better place for children and ensure that their voices are heard.

Yvonne Feri

*President of the Foundation Board of Child Protection Switzerland,
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Index

Background: Why, for what reason, wherefore	6
How is the implementation of children's rights reviewed? The state reporting procedure	7
Results: Children and young people rightfully have their say	10
Opinion and Participation	10
Equal opportunities and elimination of discrimination	14
Protection from violence	16
Privacy	18
Family and care	19
Children and young people with a disability	21
Health	22
Environment	24
Poverty and Social Security	25
Education	26
Play and Leisure	27
Refuge and Asylum	29
Children's rights education - do children know their rights?	31
Children and young people give feedback on the report	32
And now? From expressing opinions to exerting influence	34
The Making of	36
Profile of the participatory bodies	49
Acknowledgements	51
Literature reference	52



Children's Conference 2020

Background: Why, for what reason, wherefore

Swiss children and young people finally have their say

For more than 20 years, children and adolescents in Switzerland have been entitled to binding rights in the areas of protection, provision and participation. For the first time since Switzerland's accession to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the voices of children and adolescents are directly included in the reporting process and made available to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This report was developed in collaboration with children and young people from all over Switzerland and from different settings and reflects the perspective of the target group on

the implementation of children's rights in Switzerland. Children and young people worked out the basics in work-shops, school classes, children's and young people's parliaments and other extracurricular children's and young people's activities, but also in refugee centres and in a workshop for children who do not live in their family of origin. Staff of the Child Rights Network Switzerland then condensed these and edited them into the present report.

Participants

A total of 424 children and young people between the ages of 5 and 21 participated and contributed in some form of reporting - some in an active role, others in the form of a broad sounding board. All children and teens participated in the workshops voluntarily and on their own initiative. The different participation bodies are described in detail at the end of the document. It should be noted that many

Who is this report aimed at?

The report is aimed at all those who take the concerns of children and young people seriously and are committed to their implementation. In concrete terms, however, it is written for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, consisting of 18 independent experts

of the children and adolescents who participated in the project were more interested in children's rights than the average Swiss child and adolescent, and therefore already had more prior knowledge about them¹. To compensate for this, the results of representative surveys were used to supplement the results of the various participation forums.

from all over the world². The Committee compliance with children's rights worldwide and makes recommendations to the states on how best to implement the Convention and where there is still a need for action.

How is the implementation of children's rights reviewed? The CRC reporting cycle

Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child does not automatically mean that the rights will always be granted to all children. Therefore, a regular review of the implementation is important. This is done within the framework of the so-called **CRC reporting cycle**. In a first step, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child invites civil society to submit information on the most important issues at present. In Switzerland, children and adolescents were also involved in this process for the first time in 2019 (see box Children's and young people's voices for the «List of Issues prior to Reporting»)³. In a next step, the Committee adopts the "List of issues prior to reporting (LOIPR)", a list of the most pressing problems at present.

After that, the Federal Council takes a position on these most urgent topics in the so-called **State Report**. In this report, it states how the implementation of children's rights in Switzerland is progressing. In the procedure, however, the UN Committee on the Rights of the

Child not only wants a statement from the respective national government, but also consults civil society, i.e. child rights organizations and children and young people. In Switzerland, the Child Rights Network Switzerland, together with over 50 other organizations, compiles the so-called **NGO Report** in each case. Based on the report of the Federal Council, the NGO report and now also a separate **report of children and adolescents**, the stakeholders are heard by the Committee in Geneva.

Finally, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child makes **recommendations** to Switzerland on the further implementation of children's rights, the so-called **Concluding Observations**.



Children´s and young people´s voices for the «List of Issues prior to Reporting» (Pilot project 2019)

In 2019, the Child Rights Network Switzerland conducted a pilot project in which children and young people were able to contribute their views on the situation of children's rights to the so-called "List of Issues prior to Reporting" (LOIPR). The project was based on results, which were developed in already existing structures (e.g. in the Federal Youth Session or the National Children's Conference). Thus, participants of different ages, origins and socio-economic backgrounds took part (in the pilot phase, however, only from German-speaking Switzerland).

The discussion showed that children and young people would like to have more say in all matters that affect them. This could be in the family, at school, in the community or in political decisions in general. They want to make their voices heard and be taken seriously by adults. They point out that they want to know about their rights in an age-appropriate and comprehensive way.

The issues highlighted by children and young people in Switzerland revolve around their personal living environments and experiences.

Particularly noteworthy is the sensitivity of children and young people to larger social contexts and challenges. In particular, they point out the concrete need for action in the environmental field or that intercultural tolerance, exchange and learning must be promoted.



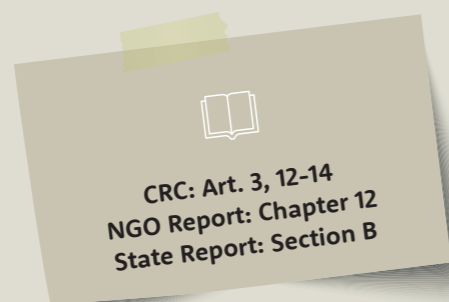
A working group of the Youth Parliament of the Canton of Vaud has produced a short film on the implementation of children's rights in Switzerland.
<https://youtu.be/SLJRIDv41pk>

Results: Children and young people rightfully have their say

Compared to other countries, Switzerland seems to be doing well in implementing children's rights: a prosperous constitutional state with functioning education, social and health care systems. But if you take a closer look, this is unfortunately not true for all children and young people in Switzerland. Even in our country there are many who grow up in difficult circumstances and their children's rights

are not always guaranteed. The monitoring of the implementation of children's rights is therefore important even in wealthy Switzerland.

The following pages provide an overview of those children's rights issues, concerns and demands that the participating children and young people in the project have particularly highlighted⁴.



Opinion and Participation

In Switzerland, the participation of the population in politics as well as in leisure time is an important pillar of our democratic society. Whether in the community of residence, in

the canton, at the federal level, or in the soccer club or in the neighbourhood meeting hall. While in the political context the age of participation is 18 years⁵ in almost all of Switzerland, children have extensive rights of co-

determination in all matters that affect them according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children and adolescents should

be able to participate in society on an equal basis and help shape the world in which they live. However, this requires adults who enable them to have a say and take the concerns of children and young people seriously.

The right to participation and co-determination is central to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is regulated in various passages. For example, in the consideration of the best interests of the child, in the freedom of opinion and information, in the freedom of thought, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion.

The right to an own opinion and the right to co-determination is therefore also a central concern for the children and young people

who worked on the report. It is not only the right that is best known, but also the one that has been the subject of the most discussion. In the political-social context, the children and adolescents mention youth and children's parliaments, student councils and having a say in associations as useful existing possibilities they are aware of. The vast majority of children and young people involved feel that they are taken seriously and that their opinion counts among their friends and family. The situation is different in the area of school: there, only half of the children and young people feel they have a say. As far as politics is concerned, only one in five children feels that their opinion is taken seriously.

Where do YOU have a say?

Especially when children do not live with their family of origin, the right to co-determination is particularly important. These children de-

scribe their experience with the KESB as one in which the KESB⁶ listens more to the parents than to the wishes of the children. One girl, for example, reports that she was partially forced to have contact with her family of origin against her will. This is very problematic and even affects several children's rights.

The right to co-determination begins at a very low level, whether it is a question of having a say in how leisure activities are organized or what rules of conduct apply in the family or at school. Children and young people also want to have a say in what they learn at school or in media programs (Internet, TV and radio). In another workshop, the participating children who live in a home discuss the strict rules of the institutional setting, especially with regard to the rigid distribution of "responsibilities" and the rules on media use.

“
We also want to have more of a say in politics.
”
(Lars, 11 years)

“
Young people have good ideas and absolutely must have a say where it directly affects them.
”
(Etienne, 16 years)

Children and young people demand:

- In all municipalities, minors should be able to participate in the political process through the creation of youth initiatives or youth motions⁷.
- Youth parliaments are needed in all cantons.
- The voting age should be lowered to 16.
- Teachers should be made more aware of children's rights.
- Class councils should be introduced in schools, and there should be more co-determination (also with regard to content).
- Children who do not live with their family of origin should have the right to decide with whom they live.
- Children should be informed honestly and transparently about visiting arrangements with parents, so that they can understand the decisions of the authorities.



Children and young people from workshops in asylum shelters present their statements: "I am 16 years old and I am not allowed to do the integration year. I want to go to school like my friends of the same age. I have negative."


Ich Möchte

Wie meine Gleichaltrigen
Freizeit zur

Schule gehen
Ich möchte positiv

Bin 16 Jahre alt und
darf das
nicht
Integration
machen

nicht


 CRC: Art. 2, 6, 19, 24, 30, 34, 37, 39
 NGO report: chapters 10, 20, 29
 State Report: Section B

Equal opportunities and elimination of discrimination

Discrimination is a concern for many young people in Switzerland. We speak of discrimination when people are treated worse than others because of their skin colour, their origin, their sexual orientation, language, culture or religion, or because of their body. Discrimination can also take the form of bullying (see also the chapter on [“Protection against violence”](#)). Equality of opportunity means that all children and young people, regardless of who they are, where they come from and who and how wealthy their parents are, should have the same opportunities for a healthy and happy life.

children at school. Children in the asylum process are particularly affected by discrimination and inequality of opportunity. Their access to mandatory education is limited. Frequent changes of school as part of the transfer from federal refugee centers to a canton and to a municipality lead to school disruptions. At the cantonal level, children are sometimes educated separately for a long time instead of being able to quickly transfer to the regular school with other children. In particular, children and adolescents with a rejected asylum application (so-called negative decision) are increasingly being educated separately or are no longer entitled to education or an apprenticeship after the age of 16. This is of great concern to the children and young people from the workshops in the refugee centers. They want to attend the “right” school and not only the internal one of the accommodations. They want contact with their peers and to learn the language quickly. They want to have the opportunity to participate in educational programs regardless of their residency status, even if they are over 16.

Where have YOU experienced discrimination?

Children and young people in Switzerland see great potential for improvement in the area of discrimination, especially when it comes to religion or sexual orientation. Foster children, adopted children and children in care participating in the workshop had their own experiences with discrimination. They reported that they are laughed at and teased by other

“Children should all be treated equally.
(Lena, 10 years) **”**

“Switzerland is a very expensive country. Not everyone has access to everything.
(Salomé, 15 years) **”**

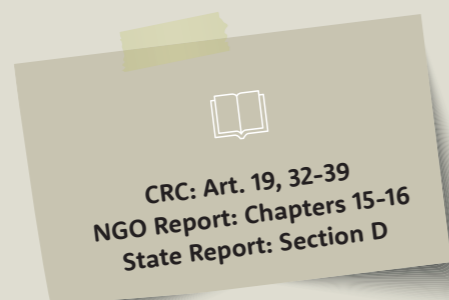
“I want to go to school like my friends of the same age. I have a negative decision, I am 16 years old and I am not allowed to do the integration year.
(Arwin, 16 years) **”**



Children and young people demand:

- All children in Switzerland must be treated equally and receive support that meets their needs.
- The chance of education and participation in social life must not depend on the residence status of the children and adolescents. Young people over 16 years of age with a negative asylum decision should also have access to education.





Protection from violence

Children should not experience violence: neither at home, at school, nor online. Several articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child call on signatory states to take measures to protect children from violence, neglect and abandonment.

What do YOU think about violence in upbringing?

Every year, around 2-3.3% of all children living in Switzerland are referred to a specialized child protection organization (e.g. to child and adult protection organizations or child protection groups at hospitals) because of a risk to their wellbeing. Most frequently are minors in danger due to physical abuse and neglect⁸. 1500 children are treated annually in paediatric emergency departments in hospitals for child maltreatment⁹. Significantly more children are also affected by corporal punishment: a study shows that half of all children in Switzerland

experience physical or psychological violence in their upbringing^{10, 11}.

In 2012, a broad study on sexual violence against minors in Switzerland showed something startling: often the perpetrators of a sexual assault are not - as is often assumed - adult family members, but acquaintances of the same age. The figures

show a clear picture: in almost half of the cases (42%), young people experience sexual violence in the context of their first love relationship with peers. In 39% of the cases the perpetrators come from the circle of friends and only in 9% it is an adult person from the family circle¹².

This fact was also confirmed in the workshops held: Many of the participants have already observed violence in education, but they lacked the words to talk about it. They feel that there is a big taboo about this in Switzerland.

The young people see the problems mainly in the following four areas: Violence online (cyberbullying), psychological violence and bullying, sexual violence and extortion. The topic of bullying and cyberbullying concerns many children and young people and was a topic in various workshops. The fact that bullying is an everyday problem in Switzerland was also shown by the 2018 PISA study: In no other European country do so many children suffer from bullying as in Switzerland¹³. In the discussions among the children and young people, they found that it is difficult to speak openly about concrete situations of violence as a person affected by violence or as an observer of violence. They also often experience a lack of competence on the part of teachers, especially in the case of bullying. In order for an open discussion to be possible,

“
In Switzerland, people are discreet. Violence in education is not talked about, it happens in secrecy.
 (Sara, 18 years) **”**

“
Adults outside the family look the other way and do not help the children, even though they see the need.
 (Giada, 15 years) **”**

show a clear picture: in almost half of the cases (42%), young people experience sexual violence in the context of their first love relationship with peers. In 39% of the cases the perpetrators come from the circle of friends and only in 9% it is an adult person from the family circle¹².

“

The parents are alcoholics and therefore aggressive - the children are afraid and do what the parents want.

(Samantha, 14 years) **”**



the topic must be de-tabooed and public awareness must be raised. If children and adolescents feel that they are being taken seriously, they will be more willing to talk about what they have experienced.

The right to protection from violence is particularly relevant for children and adolescents who experience or have experienced violence

themselves. Children who do not live with their family of origin have sometimes experienced that the authorities recognize emergency situations too late or do not take them seriously enough. The children therefore live in difficult situations for a very long time and are thus not sufficiently protected.

Children and young people demand:

- There is a need for removal of taboos regarding violence so that children and adolescents can better talk about what they have experienced, especially about sexual violence between peers.
- Stop cyberbullying. Social media providers should be made responsible for preventing harmful content.
- The KESB should carry out unannounced visits in the event of a possible risk to the best interests of the child by the parents.



CRC: Art. 16
NGO report: -
State Report: -

Privacy

Children and young people have a right to privacy. This means they have a right to be alone and no one is allowed to read or take their personal belongings without asking. In the same way, it is an invasion of privacy for

someone to look at someone else's chat history on their mobile phone without asking, or to go through someone else's personal belongings. It also means that parents and siblings should knock and ask permission before coming into the room or bathroom. Children and young people are also confronted with photos and videos of them appearing online unwanted. Even if there is usually no malicious intent on the part of parents, friends or classmates, this can be awkward for those affected.

Children and young people who participated in this report are very aware of their right to privacy. In principle, most of them think that

Do YOUR parents knock before they come into the room?

the right to privacy is largely respected in Switzerland. They consider it problematic that once pictures and content have been published, it is almost impossible to remove them from the internet. They would like app and social media platform providers to take more responsibility and consistently delete images on request.

The situation is different for children living in asylum accommodations. The crowded conditions are stressful for many. The children want a flat for the family instead of sharing one or two rooms together. Especially unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors would like to have their own room with a possibility to retreat, instead of sharing a room with a strange young person.

We are far from something like a private life. Everything is so difficult.

(Milad, 17 years)

Children and young people demand:

- Providers of apps and social media platforms should take more responsibility and ensure that content can be deleted in a timely manner. This will, among other things, make it easier to combat cyberbullying.
- Refugee families should be accommodated more quickly in flats.
- In collective accommodation and refugee centres, families with children should have the right to several rooms and refugee minors should be given the opportunity to have a single room.

CRC: Art. 5, 9-12, 20-21, 25, 27
NGO Report: Chapters 14, 17, 18
State Report: Section E

Family and care

Children and young people have a right to grow up feeling safe and cared for. In Switzerland, seven out of ten children grow up with their parents, around 15% with only one parent. However, there are also children who cannot live with their families of origin for other reasons. For example, because the parents are no longer alive or cannot look after the children and adolescents well enough. These children and young people grow up in foster families or children's and young people's homes. There are many different types of families and ways in which children live. What they all have in common is that they have a responsibility to care for the children and young people living with them. They are responsible for ensuring that the children and young people can develop well. The state has the task of supporting parents and legal guardians in their responsibility, for example, by offering maternal and paternal counselling or educational guidance.

and 12 year old children surveyed feel safe and secure and receive help from their family when problems arise¹⁴.

The children and young people who participated in this report are aware of their right to family and care, especially in the case of separation of their own parents. This right becomes very central for refugee children and young people: especially for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors family is a key issue. They miss their family and worry about them. They would like to be permitted to visit family members in other countries, or in some cases they would also like to be able to bring family members to Switzerland. But the issue is also crucial for children who fled with their parents: often other parents or siblings are in other countries and there is no possibility to visit them.

The right to care and family is also crucial to children who do not live with their families of origin. For them, the need for physical security and closeness is a particular issue.

What does family mean to YOU?

A representative survey of 8-12 year old children shows that four out of five children are very happy with the people they live with. Less than 2% do not feel comfortable with the people in their family environment. The survey also shows that almost all of the 10

I miss my father and my sister. They are in Greece and I am here alone with my mother.

(Ayden, 5 years)

Those who have fled without family have many problems. They can't concentrate well at school.

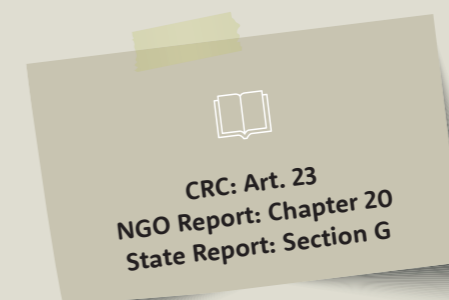
(Karim, 17 years)

Children and young people demand:

- In case of separation of parents, children and adolescents should have the right to stay in the same place so that the environment (school and friends) remains the same.
- Refugee children and adolescents should have the opportunity to visit their family in their country of origin or family members in other countries, regardless of their asylum status.
- Refugee children and adolescents should have the possibility of family reunification in Switzerland, regardless of the residence status and procedural status of their parents.
- The right to family reunification should be extended to parents and siblings of children and adolescents, especially minors, who have come to Switzerland unaccompanied.
- Children and adolescents growing up in institutions should also be able to have the right to physical closeness and a sense of comfort from adult caregivers.



Children's Conference 2019



Children and young people with a disability

In Switzerland, around 8,000 children and adolescents are affected by a severe disability and a further 44,000 by a moderate to mild disability. Many of them live in private households, but there are also around 4,650 children in institutions¹⁵. Children and young people with a disability have a right to special care, as well as appropriate parenting and education, so that they can participate inde-

of child and youth policy. However, there are also no focal points within child and youth policy that are specifically dedicated to the equality of children with disabilities. Specific measures exist primarily in the area of school integration. In recent years, there has been increased attention to the needs of children and young people in common structures.



The minimum social benefits are available in Switzerland. But you have to arrange your own help in everyday life.

(Pascal, 17)



Do YOU know children and young people with a disability?

For the children and young people involved in this report, the rights of children with disabilities are not very present in their everyday lives. Hence, these rights were only marginally discussed. However, minors who have close contact with people with disabilities are well aware of the problem: they see a need for improvement and are of the opinion that people with disabilities in Switzerland still have a long way to go before they can participate in social life on an equal level.

pendently and actively in society. Although there have been improvements in recent years, not all people with disabilities in Switzerland are able to lead an equal and self-determined life. For example, there is still no national strategy for the equality of children with disabilities; they are part of the general principles

Children and young people demand:

- We need more resources and support for children with disabilities in standard schools.



CRC: Art. 6, 24, 27, 33
 NGO Report: Chapters 21-23
 State Report: Section G

Health

All children and young people have a right to good health care and living conditions that enable them to grow up healthily. This includes things that are fortunately standard for most people in Switzerland: clean water, a healthy diet and access to basic medical care. Nevertheless, even in Switzerland not every child has the same chance of good health. Poverty and the level of education have an influence on health and the extent to which one is exposed to certain health risks. The Health Report 2020 on the health of children, adolescents and young adults in Switzerland shows that their health status is fortunately high.

In addition to the right to health, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child also stipulates the protection of children and young people from intoxicants. In Switzerland, for example, it is forbidden for under 16-year-olds to drink alcohol. For tobacco products, the age limit is 16-18 years, depending on the canton.

What do YOU need to feel healthy?

The children and young people who contributed to the report appreciate the health system in Switzerland. However, most of them are aware of how expensive it is. They see problems mainly in three areas: the possibility of (new) epidemics, addiction and mental illness. Children and young people perceive an unequal treatment of mental and physical conditions and are afraid of mental illnesses. In the area of addiction problems, the young people not only address alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs, but also behavioural addictions such as internet use and online games. The children and young people involved also have resources for dealing with these addiction risks: All of them mention the possibility to talk to their parents or another trusted person about problems and know some relevant support organisations.



It is important that children already know how to live healthily

(Alexander, 16 years)



However, there are considerable differences according to the age, gender and social status of the parents, especially with regard to health risks¹⁶: people with a low level of education often smoke more, young adults with a lower level of education play riskier online games and children from families with a low level of education exercise less and eat an unhealthier diet. The risk of mental illness also decreases for people with a higher level of education and income¹⁷.

Children and young people demand:

- There should be more help and support for young people with addiction problems, especially with regard to online addiction.
- There needs to be a de-stigmatisation of mental illnesses in order to achieve equal treatment of mental and physical health.



CRC: Art. 6
NGO Report: Chapter 25
State Report: Section G

Environment

An intact environment is the basis for the healthy development of children and young people. In recent years, young people have become increasingly concerned about the environment and climate change, and are campaigning for politicians to do more to protect the climate.

What do YOU yourself do for the environment?

This is because natural disasters are becoming more frequent with global warming: there are more frequent floods, heavy storms or heat waves. Article 6 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child obliges states to ensure the development of children, which also includes a sustainable environmental policy. Environmental protection and climate change were also a topic among the children and young people who participated in the report. The young people in particular are

Children and young people demand:

- There should be less waste, e.g. by avoiding unnecessary packaging.
- Less food should be wasted.
- Food should be labelled better and more simply with information on cultivation, production and processing.
- There should be a right to a climate-friendly environment. It is very important for the future that no child has to suffer from climate change.



A working group of the Youth Parliament of the Canton of Vaud has produced a short film on the implementation of children's rights in Switzerland. <https://youtu.be/SLJRIDv41pk>



Switzerland is doing too little to combat climate change. Climate change will have an impact on our health, there will be new diseases, for example ”

(Emily, 18)

frustrated that, in their view, Switzerland is doing too little to combat climate change. After all, the climate policy that is now being negotiated in the political sphere will primarily affect today's and tomorrow's children and young people, but it is precisely they who cannot have a say in the matter. This is also a reason for the protest and strike actions that have taken place worldwide and in Switzerland since 2019. Children and young people took to the streets as part of the global "Fridays for Future" movement and demanded measures to protect the climate and for climate justice.



CRC: Art. 26
NGO Report: Chapter 24
State Report: Section G

Poverty and Social Security

With the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, states commit themselves to providing all children and young people with access to social security and the right to an adequate standard of living.

Do YOU know someone who lives in poverty?

This means that the state must ensure that children and young people can lead a secure and dignified life despite the poverty of their families. Poverty is an almost invisible but nevertheless existing topic even in wealthy Switzerland: 144,000 children are directly affected by poverty and another 291,000 are threatened by poverty. That is every 8th child¹⁸. Poverty has consequences for health, social life and education. There is often not enough money for healthy food, a place in the house to do homework undisturbed, or a living environment that offers the opportunity to play outside regularly. Even hobbies, e.g. sports in a club, are not possible for children affected by poverty.

Children and young people demand:

- Access to leisure activities must be possible for all children, regardless of their family's financial means.
- Young people who receive social welfare benefits directly or through their parents and work should in any case be allowed to keep part of the wages they earn.



For the majority of the children and young people who worked on the report, the topic was not in the foreground of the discussion. It should be noted that it is often very difficult and associated with a lot of shame to talk about a personal experience of poverty. Especially in affluent Switzerland, those affected are afraid of experiencing further social exclusion as a result. On the other hand, the participants repeatedly emphasised that in an expensive country like Switzerland, access to services and consumption is not possible for everyone.

The youth session also dealt with the consequences for children and young people who themselves or their parents receive social welfare support. They criticised the fact that young people automatically have to hand over their wages to the social welfare office during their apprenticeship. This endangers their start in working life and discriminates them against other young people¹⁹.



CRC: Art. 28 and 29
NGO Report: Chapter 26
State Report: Section H

Education

With the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the states have committed themselves to offering all children at least compulsory primary schooling free of charge. In Switzerland, every child has access to free education. Representative survey data show that the vast majority of children are satisfied or even very satisfied with their school education.²⁰

the young people at the youth session would like to see more practice-oriented content at school.

What do YOU like about school?

Education and school are also important topics for the children and young people who participated in the report. Most of them appreciate the free education that (almost) all children in Switzerland have access to. Basically, they agree that they

The right to education is particularly important for children and young people who have fled and/or migrated. All of them clearly express the desire to learn a lot, to speak the national language in order to be able to build a life in Switzerland later on. It is important to them that they can not only attend the in-house schools in the accommodations, but also the regular elementary school in order to establish contacts with their peers. They all value school very highly.



Politics as a school subject would be a good idea!

(Svenja, 16 years)



learn many important things at school. On the other hand, the possibility of having a say in school is a recurring theme. For example,

Children and young people demand:

- Children and young people should have more say at school, including on the content of their curriculum.
- Refugee children and young people should be able to benefit as early as possible from the regular educational opportunities and be able to go to “normal” school classes.
- Young people over the age of 16 with a negative asylum decision should also have the opportunity for education.



CRC: Art. 31
NGO Report: Chapter 27
State Report: Section H

Play and Leisure

Children have the right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic life. This means that they have the opportunity to visit playgrounds, have free space for games or meeting places where they can meet safely and undisturbed. But it also includes free space in terms of time, i.e. time in which children and young people can decide for themselves what they want to do or not do. And finally, it also means that children and young people have the opportunity to pursue hobbies, attend concerts, theaters or cinemas.

people from refugee centres would like to have more opportunities to participate in social life outside the accommodation. This is hardly possible because of the lack of financial possibilities and often also because of the remoteness of the accommodation. Most of the young people involved in the report are aware that many leisure activities are expensive and not all families can afford sports activities and memberships in clubs.



But the centre is in the middle of the jungle and there is no transportation.

(Sarah, o. A.)



Do YOU have enough free time?

In a representative survey, more than 85% of 10-12 year olds say that there are enough places and opportunities to play and spend free time in their neighbourhood²¹. This is perhaps also the reason why the right to play and leisure time is particularly central for refugee children and young people and for children and young people who do not live with their family of origin. Children and young

In a workshop, children and young people discussed the topic of child labour and what this means in the Swiss context. They became aware that it is not always very easy to determine from which point on one can speak of child labour. It is important to them that children are protected from exploitative child labour, which prevents them from going to school and harms their health.



Children have the right to be children.

(Alina, 11 years)

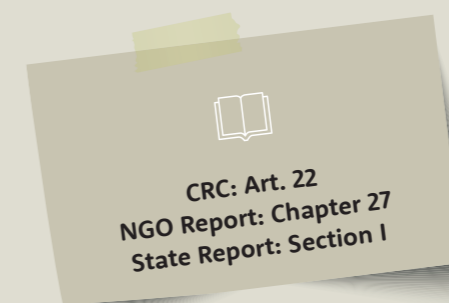


Children and young people demand:

- There should be more playgrounds in the city and a say in their design.
- There should be more space to play in the schoolyard.
- There should be opportunities for sports activities for all children, including children from poor families.
- Children and young people living in refugee centres should also have the opportunity to participate in recreational activities in the region. This is not always possible due to the remote locations of accommodations.
- Opportunities for leisure activities must also be open to children and young people with a negative asylum decision.
- No products should be imported into Switzerland that have been manufactured by children.



Children's Conference 2019



Refuge and Asylum

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child also expresses rights that apply to refugee children and youths or to them in the asylum process. Millions of people worldwide are



Why don't I get a B card even though I haven't experienced anything good?

(Mahelet, 18 years)



refugees. They have to either flee because of wars and environmental disasters or leave their homes because they cannot find work or no longer have enough to eat. In the process, children are separated

from their families or parts of their families. In Switzerland, too, children and young refugees live in asylum centers - with or without their parents. In 2019, 45% of all asylum applications were submitted by minors; of these 6,365 children, 441 children and adolescents were travelling without a parent²². The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child obliges states to ensure special protection for these persons and to cooperate with organisations that provide protection and support.

What could YOU not do without being a refugee?

The question of residence status is central for children and young people in the Swiss asylum process. Their chances, but also any unequal treatment, depend on this. For example, young people with an F permit - i.e. young people who are allowed to stay in Switzerland temporarily - have difficulties completing an education. In addition, they are generally not allowed to leave the country. Young people who have already completed compulsory education or are older than the regular school age and receive a negative asylum decision are excluded from social participation or further educational opportunities in the return centres.



Here there are studies, sports and other things. You have the possibility to work to earn something to make life better while still studying. It is really good, very precious. But resolving the resident permit problem will be even more precious.

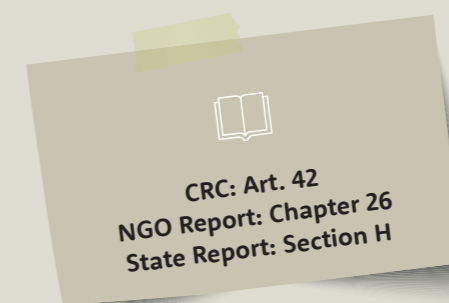
(Akono, 16 years)



Children and young people demand:

Many of the demands of refugee children and young people concern all of the above-mentioned life situations, in particular equal opportunities, the right to privacy, the right to education, the right to family and care, and the right to play and leisure. For clarification, all the demands of the refugee children and young people are listed again here:

- The opportunity for education and participation in social life must not be dependent on residence status.
- Young people over 16 years of age with a negative asylum decision should also have the opportunity for education.
- Refugee families should be accommodated in homes without delay.
- In collective accommodation and refugee centres, families with children should have the right to several rooms and refugee minors should have the possibility of a single room.
- Refugee children and adolescents should have the opportunity to visit family in their country of origin or family members in other countries, regardless of their asylum status.
- Refugee children and adolescents should have the possibility of family reunification in Switzerland, regardless of the residence status and procedural status of their parents.
- The right to family reunification should be extended to parents and siblings of children and adolescents, especially minors, who are unaccompanied in Switzerland.
- Refugee children and adolescents should be able to benefit from regular educational opportunities as early as possible and be able to attend "normal" school classes.
- Children and young people living in refugee centres should also have the opportunity to take part in leisure activities in the region. The access to these activities must be taken into account when choosing their accommodation.
- Opportunities for leisure activities must also be open to children and young people with a negative asylum decision.



Children's rights education - do children know their rights?

Children's rights are of no use if children do not know their rights. Therefore, all countries that have signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have committed themselves to making children's rights known (Art. 42). In Switzerland, children's rights education is now anchored in all language-regional curricula as a cross-curricular topic, and there is a correspondingly large amount of material with which children's rights can be addressed in an age-appropriate manner at the various school levels²³. Nevertheless, children's rights education is still not explicitly anchored in the overarching legal provisions of Switzerland (neither in the Federal Constitution nor in most cantonal school laws).

Do children and young people in Switzerland know their rights? We asked the children who worked on this report:

- The vast majority of children have already heard of the rights of the child.
- Children who are refugees and live in asylum centres in Switzerland, on the other hand, barely know of children's rights.

Children and young people are particularly aware of the right to freedom of opinion and

participation, the right to education, the right to play and leisure time, the protection of privacy and the right to protection from violence. In discussions with the children and young people, it was expressed that although they know that they have a right of co-determination, they often do not know exactly what this co-determination means and how it can be claimed.

Do YOU know your rights?

Does this mean that almost all children in Switzerland know about the rights of the child? This cannot be answered from the discussions of the children and young people who worked on this report. This is because we can assume that children who have already heard about children's rights were also more interested in the workshops. According to a representative survey by the University of Applied Sciences Zurich, less than half of the children in Switzerland (aged 8 to 12) know about children's rights or the Convention on the Rights of the Child.²⁴

“
Children need to know that they have children's rights!
(Selina, 10 years)
”

Children and young people demand:

- The state should ensure that all children know and understand their rights. For example, with a fixed project week for all children in school on the topic of children's rights.

Children and young people give feedback on the report

We presented the first results of the Children and Youth Report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Switzerland to a group of children (aged 10-12) and young people (aged 16-18)²⁵ at the end of 2020. These are their thoughts on it:

“ I would address the school more regarding the requests for play and leisure time, since it has a lot of influence on homework and thus bears a lot of responsibility. Overall, I find the report very successful and it means for me a step towards more (political) participation for us children and young people. ”

“ I think it's great that young people were able to contribute their texts. ”

“ I think it is good that the report exists because it is not so extensive and therefore easy to read for young people. From my point of view, every topic worth mentioning has been dealt with and something has been said about it. That is why I don't see anything missing in this report. I would like a future report on children and young people to have a similar structure to this one and not be too long. ”

“ We would like the right to a climate-friendly environment, because this is very important for the future and we don't want any child to suffer from climate change. ”

“ I think it's good that this brochure will be available in several languages! ”

“ Personally, I don't think the observation is accurate, that everyday (psychological) violence by parents or authorities is not an issue for the children and youth in the workshops. Many who experience violence by their parents do not dare to talk about it in an exposed group. In my circle of friends and among many acquaintances, however, violence by parents is definitely an issue. ”

“ I think it's cool that there are questions in the report, questions that you have to answer yourself. ”

“ We think the report is really great because it contains a lot of interesting information. It is well designed and exciting. ”

“ I think it is essential that there is this report with our voices, because a representative group of us children and young people is heard and thus we are all offered a platform. ”

“ I find the Children's Rights Report a bit complicated to understand. ”

“ As an additional request, I would personally add that schools and institutions need to have better strategies, more preventative measures, and more extensive information when it comes to bullying. I have experienced myself in a bullying situation at school that most schools cannot fulfil their responsibilities in this area. ”

This valuable feedback is part of the quality assurance. It helps to ensure that the report does as much justice as possible to the work of the children and young people and supports the clarification and concretization of the text.



Federal Youth Session 2019. Copyright Indra Crittin

And now? From expressing opinions to exerting influence

This report, together with the NGO report, will be presented to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva in spring 2021 and will contribute to the review of the situation of children's rights in Switzerland. After consulting civil society, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child will also consult the Swiss government (state consultation) and then draw up recommendations for improving the implementation of children's rights in Switzerland. These recommendations will be submitted to the Federal Council, which will be responsible for the implementation. This closes the circle: the ideas of children and adolescents could not only be voiced, they will also be heard and finally flow into the recommendations for improving the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Switzerland.

The report shows how important it is to take **children and young people seriously as experts in their own affairs**, especially when it comes to implementing their rights. The report provides valuable information on success factors and challenges in addressing children's rights. These findings are made available in a separate guide and are intended to encourage the Confederation and the cantons to involve children and young people even more frequently in implementing the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The children and young people themselves also benefited from the work on the report: not only are the children and young people more sensitised to the issue, but they also return to their peer groups (schools, friends, hobbies) strengthened and with more knowl-

edge, thus acting as multipliers on children's rights. At the same time, the finished report is addressed to the children and young people themselves and can be used as a basis for discussing children's rights (e.g. in schools). And last but not least, the report lays the

foundation for the future systematic inclusion of children and young people when it comes to assessing the situation of children's rights in Switzerland and finding possible solutions.

Practical guide for open child and youth work

The Umbrella Organisation for Open Child and Youth Work (Dachverband Offene Kinder- und Jugendarbeit DOJ) has developed a guideline for this project that supports youth workers in addressing children's rights in their organisations. The guide sensitises the professionals of the OKJA to children's rights and shows what it means for their daily work in practice.

[Link and image of the guide]



Children's Conference 2019

The Making of

The project management and the editing of the report was carried out by the office of the Child Rights Network Switzerland. A project group consisting of seven member organizations of the network as well as an external child rights expert participated in the project: the [Swiss National Youth Council SNYC](#), the [Children's Lobby Switzerland](#), the [umbrella organization for open child and youth work DOJ](#), the [Pro Juventute Foundation](#), [Save the Children Switzerland](#), [PACH Foster and Adoptive Children Switzerland](#) as well as the [Commission for Education, Training and Science of the Association of Public Service Employees VPOD](#). In addition, the [Pestalozzi Children's Foundation](#) assumed the leading role in the implementation of the national children's conferences. The external expert for children's rights accompanied the process and supported the project in development and quality control in order to reflect the work of the children and adolescents as authentically as possible²⁶.

How do you involve children and young people in reporting on the implementation of children's rights? The project team dealt intensively with this question. In the end, the decision was made in favour of a very heterogeneous approach in order to consider the diversity of the children's and young people's living environments. The participation events were planned and carried out in the framework of the respective project partner organizations: in the course of the national children's conference, in services offered by open children's and youth work at community level, in youth parliaments, during the federal youth session and in a school class. Furthermore, the activities also took place in topic-specific settings, such as in refugee centers and in a workshop for children who do not live in their family of origin.

Things sometimes turn out quite differently to what you expect: the Covid 19 pandemic

The implementation period of the project coincided exactly with the first wave of the Covid 19 pandemic in Switzerland, which resulted in nationwide school closures in spring 2020. As a result, many of the planned workshops could not be held or could not be held in the planned scope. Thanks to the commitment and flexibility of everyone involved, the project goal was nevertheless achieved: new ways were found for children and young people to participate in reporting.

The experiences and sometimes massive restrictions of children's rights during the Covid 19 pandemic are not reflected in this report, although initial findings on the impact on children and adolescents are known today²⁷. While it appears that children and adolescents worldwide will be largely spared the health consequences of the pandemic, they are among those who will suffer the most from the socioeconomic consequences and longer-term implications²⁸.

C:
 Meine Eltern
 sind getrennt.
 Ich bin in der Woche
 bei meiner ~~meiner~~ Mutter
 und in dem Wochenende
 bei meinem Vater.

Sie haben
 uns mehrfach
 gefragt!



Wenn meine Eltern
 sich trennen würden,
 ich dort bleiben
 der in dieser
 Wohnung jetzt wohnen
 würde. Denn ich will weiterhin
 in diese Schule! 😊 @



A poster of the children who discussed the CRC in their school class. "My parents are separated. I am with my mother during the week and with my father at weekends" / "They have asked us several times!" / "If my parents were to separate, I would want to stay there and live with that parent who stays in our home. Because I want to keep going to that school" / "I want to go to my father's".



National Children's Conference 2019 and 2020

Organizing institutions: Pestalozzi Children's Foundation, Swiss National Youth Council (SNYC) and Children's Lobby Switzerland

The **Pestalozzi Children's Foundation** is not a project partner of the working group on the children and youth report, but is in charge of the implementation of the children's conference. The Pestalozzi Children's Foundation is committed to children and adolescents. The Children's Village in Trogen is a place of intercultural exchange, where young people from different backgrounds meet and where an understanding for the unfamiliar is created. In addition, the foundation works in twelve countries worldwide to promote access to education for disadvantaged children.

Kinderlobby Schweiz is a non-profit association that works to ensure that children have a say in tomorrow's society as equal partners. The concerns of children and young people should be given a voice. With the Children's Lobbyists, these voices are carried to the Federal Parliament in Bern. The work of Kinderlobby Schweiz is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC).

Swiss National Youth Council (SNYC) was also the sponsor of the forum. More on SNYC in the section "Workshop on children's rights in the framework program of the federal youth session (p. XY)".

Description Participation Forum:

The National Children's Conference empowers children to learn about their rights and to participate in shaping national policy. It offers children aged 10-13 the opportunity to learn about their rights and discuss their implementation in Switzerland. In three different workshops, the children developed concrete demands to politicians. In the children's conferences of 2018-2020, they participated in the UN reporting process on the basis of various children's rights discussions. The goal of the children's conference, in addition to formulating demands, is for the children to become ambassadors for children's rights and to report on children's rights in their school classes and their environment upon their return. ([further information](#)).

Period of implementation: November 2019 and November 2020 (with project focus)
Periodicity (mark selected): annually
Event location: Pestalozzi Children's Village, Trogen
 Participation was free of charge and voluntary.

Participants

Number: 72 children
Age: 10-13 years
Origin: German-speaking Switzerland, with and without a migration background

Possibilities of participation:

A high degree of participation is ensured at the children's conference; the children have a lot of opportunities for co-determination and personal responsibility. The methods chosen in the workshops are varied and age-appropriate.

- The workshop topics are determined by the children themselves for the next year;
- The main topics within the workshops are determined independently and the demands to politics are worked out independently. The workshops place great emphasis on participation, democratic opinion-forming and the equal value of all opinions;
- The children organize the final event independently and present the demands to the invited guests and politicians.
- As far as the children's statements are compatible with the principles of children's rights, the adults do not exert any influence.
- The participating children work out the rules for living together during the three days of the conference themselves.



Workshop "Children's Rights" with foster children, adopted children and children in care

Organizing institution: PACH Foster and Adoptive Children Switzerland

The NGO PACH offers psychological, educational and social work counselling, among others for foster and adoptive children, for parents who give their child into care or give it up for adoption and for foster and adoptive parents. In addition, PACH organizes information events and courses for future foster and adoptive parents and implements research projects in the areas of adoption and foster children. The perspective of the child is central: PACH sees itself as responsible for safeguarding the best interests of the child in family placement settings. ([Further information](#))

Description Participation Forum

To kick start the event, the children and young people in foster care discussed, which children's rights they were already aware of. With the help of a [Film by Clip&Klar](#), they discussed the following five children's rights in detail: prohibition of discrimination, protection of children living outside the family, separation from parents, right to life and best interests of the child. In the second part, the participants worked out in two small groups in which everyday situations their children's rights are currently not respected.

Period of implementation: June 2020
Periodicity (mark selected): once
Event location: Zürich
Further information: Participation was free of charge and voluntary.

Participants

Number: 5 Children (4 children in a home and 1 child living in a foster family)
Age: 10-15 years
Origin: German-speaking Switzerland, with and without a migration background

Possibilities of participation:

The children brought their own ideas, experiences and thoughts to the discussion.



Workshop on children's rights in the framework program of the federal youth session

Organizing institution

The **Swiss National Youth Council SNYC** has established itself as an umbrella organization for youth organizations. It campaigns for and with its 53 member associations for better framework conditions for children and young people and acts as their voice. As a competence center for youth promotion and youth participation, it is available as an advisory body and competent contact for various actors in youth work.

The Federal Youth Session is the SNYC's largest long-term project and has been held regularly since 1991. Every year, 200 young people from all over Switzerland are given the opportunity to become politically active for four days and to represent their concerns. Anyone interested between the ages of 14 and 21 can register free of charge - regardless of language, educational background or party affiliation. The places for the Youth Session are allocated in

a selection process that aims to ensure the broadest possible representation of young people in Switzerland. Young people thus gain access to youth participation and an insight into Swiss politics, regardless of their existing or non-existing political background.

Description Participation Forum

Swiss National Youth Council (SNYC) held a workshop on children's rights as part of the program for the youth session. But also, for the youth session the participants themselves chose children's rights as one of the eight main topics. In the workshop, the young people themselves determined the main topics within the Convention on the Rights of the Child. After a joint evaluation of the state of knowledge on children's rights, the participants continued to work in the thematic groups.

Period of Implementation: 7th - 10th of November 2019 (Workshop: 7th of November)
Periodicity (mark selected): annually
Event location: Political Forum Käfigturm and Federal House, Bern

Participants Number: 18 underage and 2 adult participants in the workshop, 200 children and young people in total at the Youth Session
Age: 14 – 18 years in the workshop (14 - 21 years in the Youth Session)
Origin: All of Switzerland, with and without a migration background

Possibilities of participation:

- The young people determined the main topics within the workshops and worked out the demands to the politicians on their own. The workshops were prepared and led by young adults who were former participants of the Youth Session.



Workshops in cantonal refugee centers and residential housing for unaccompanied minors

Organizing institution

Save the Children Switzerland, as a member of a globally active children's rights organization, is committed to the observance of children's rights with a focus on the right to life and development, education and protection from violence. In its Swiss projects, Save the Children is committed to the rights of refugee children and adolescents in the asylum sector, especially their right to formal and non-formal education, cultural participation, health. They advocate for the right to protection from violence and the prohibition of corporal punishment for all children and adolescents in Switzerland.

Description Participation Forum

The workshops were specifically aimed at refugee children and adolescents who are accommodated in collective housing in the cantons. These are children and adolescents accompanied by at least one parent as well as unaccompanied adolescents (unaccompanied minors seeking asylum). The children and adolescents are usually provisionally admitted, some children and adolescents had a negative asylum decision and were living in so-called return centers at the time of the workshops.

Period of implementation: June to September 2020
Periodicity (mark selected): once
Event location: Cantonal asylum accommodations in four cantons

Participants Number: 45 children and youths (12 UMA and 33 children and youths accompanied by at least one parent)
Age: 5-18 years
Origin: various countries of origin (a.o. Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sri Lanka, Mali, Iran)

Possibilities of participation:

Due to the children's and young people's only very marginal knowledge of German, but also because repeated visits to the asylum shelters were not possible, participation was limited to one workshop each. At the workshops, the children contributed their own opinions, experiences and requests. The children and adolescents could not be included in the follow-up of the workshops, among other things because participants were transferred to other accommodations or apartments.



School project in a primary school class

Organizing institution

The **Commission for Education, Training and Science of the VPOD (Swiss Association of Public Service Personnel)** is committed to high quality education, equal opportunities and integration. The commission is made up of teachers and educators from the various school and training levels, from kindergarten to university. Its work focuses, among other things, on integration and intercultural education, all-day schools, language teaching and the right to education.

Description Participation Forum

The students of a primary school class have discussed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its history and implementation and the UN reporting procedure. In a second part, they themselves contributed to the analysis of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and delved into selected rights.

Period of implementation: August and September 2020 (4 weeks school project)
Periodicity (mark selected): once
Location of event: Primary school in Zürich

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the project could only be carried out in one school class.

Participants

Number: 27 pupils (one primary school class)
Age: 9–13 years
Origin: Switzerland, with or without migration background

Possibilities of participation:

- Students decided which children's rights they would discuss in depth.
- They developed concrete demands for the selected children's rights
- The participants jointly defined the classroom rules for dealing with each other



Youth Parliament of the Canton of Vaud (& Youth Parliament of the Canton of Zurich)

Organizing institution

As the largest organization for children and young people in Switzerland, the **Pro Juventute Foundation** is committed to ensuring that children and young people are an equal part of society and can help shape their environment. Therefore, Pro Juventute asked the **Youth Parliament of the Canton of Vaud** (Commission de jeunes du Canton de Vaud) as well as the Youth Parliament of the Canton of Zurich to cooperate in the project to review the implementation of children's rights in Switzerland. Unfortunately, the collaboration of the Youth Parliament of the Canton of Zurich had to be cancelled, as the Covid 19 pandemic made a meeting impossible. The following information therefore refers to the Youth Parliament of the Canton of Vaud.

Description Participation Forum

The **Youth Parliament of the Canton of Vaud** has brainstormed in two sessions to outline key topics for reporting. A working group of the youth parliament will continue to work with this and create a short film on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Switzerland. The participants determine the further steps and the focus independently.

All members of the Youth Parliament of Vaud were able to participate in the project. The participants are pupils, high school students, university students or trainees.

Period of implementation: since March 2020
Periodicity (mark selected): continuously (approx. monthly)
Location of event: Lausanne

Participants

Number: 9 active participants (4 of them are minors)
 25 passive members (plenum of the youth parliament)
Age: 16–19 years
Origin: Canton of Vaud, with and without a migrant background

Possibility of participation:

- Conception of the working group meetings and workshops
- Selection of the thematic focal points
- Decision about the way of dealing with the chosen main topics as well as their documentation
- Conception, direction and production of the short film on children's rights



La Chasse aux Droits (Youth work centre Jeunesse de la Côte, Peseux)

Organizing institution

The **umbrella organisation Open Child and Youth Work Switzerland** supports, positions, represents and networks open child and youth work (OKJA). OKJA sees itself as an important player in out-of-school education. It accompanies, supports and promotes children, adolescents and young adults.

The participation project was carried out by the animation team of the **youth work centre “Jeunesse de la Côte” in Peseux**.

Description Participation Forum

The animation team prepared the workshops. The young people participated voluntarily in the various activities. The young people created a picture of where they stand in terms of children’s rights and how much they see them respected.

Period of implementation: 9th of September 2020
Periodicity (mark selected): once
Location of event: Peseux, Canton Neuchâtel

Participants

Number: 8 children actively participated in the workshop, 20 children took part in the informal discussions on the topic of children’s rights afterwards.

Age: 13 to 15 years

Origin: Young people with and without a migration background from the region

Miscellaneous: All OKJA services are low-threshold and open. Participation is always voluntary and free of charge.

Possibility of participation:

- Participate in the creation of a picture on the topic of children’s rights.
- Personal positioning in the picture, where each individual stands in relation to his/her child rights.



Survey on children’s rights via Instagram story (Detached Youth Work Flawil)

Organizing institution

The umbrella organisation Open Child and Youth Work Switzerland supports, positions, represents and networks detached child and youth work (OKJA). OKJA sees itself as an important player in out-of-school education. It accompanies, supports and promotes children, adolescents and young adults.

The participatory event was carried out by the Open Youth Work Flawil and supported by the umbrella organisation **Open Child and Youth Work Switzerland**.

Description Participation Forum

In February and March 2020, four young people formed an initial working group and, together with the youth worker, discussed how they

would like to address the topic of children’s rights. The initial idea was to raise the issue of children’s rights among the young people via stories on Instagram. However, with the “lockdown” as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this group was not able to continue.

After the summer holidays, Youth Work Flawil launched a new appeal, whereupon a 15-year-old young man came forward. With the help of the youth workers, he created and posted the stories. Afterwards, around 30 children and young people took part in the discussion online. The evaluation of the results from the Insta-stories was again carried out by the 15-year-old boy.

Period of implementation: September 2020
Periodicity (mark selected): once
Location of event: Flawil

Participants

Number: Preliminary work of the four-member working group. One young person was actively involved in the preparation and design of the Instagram stories. 25-30 young people participated in stories, more than 100 young people saw the stories.

Age: 13 to 17 years

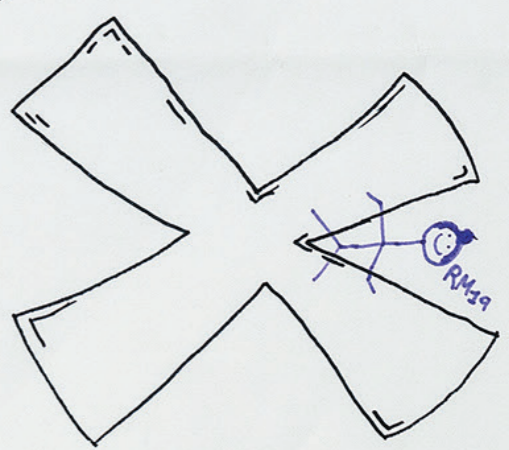
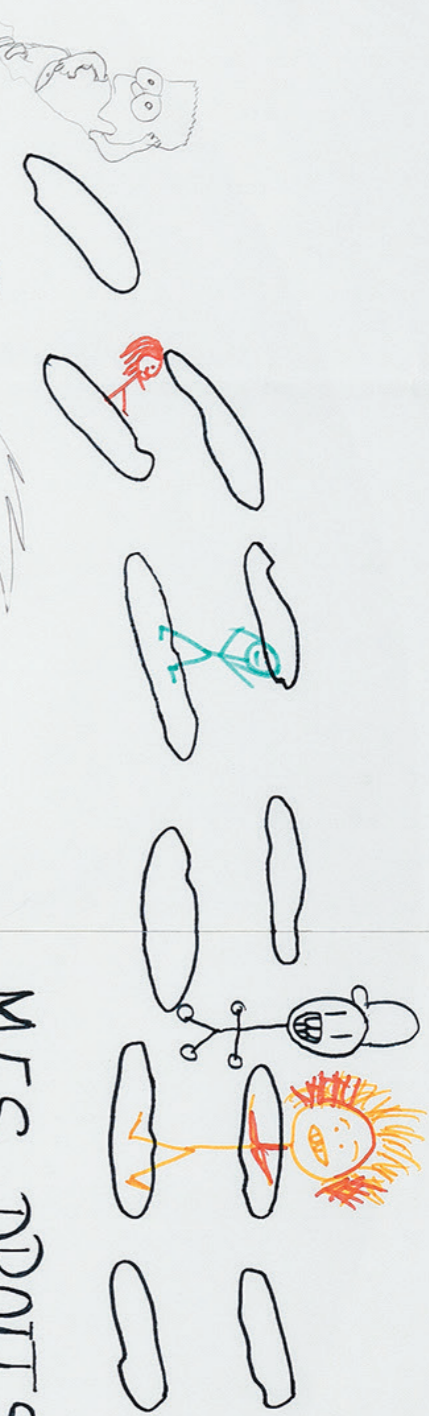
Origin: Young people with (highest proportion) and without a migration background from the region

Miscellaneous: All OKJA services are low-threshold and open. Participation is always voluntary and free of charge.

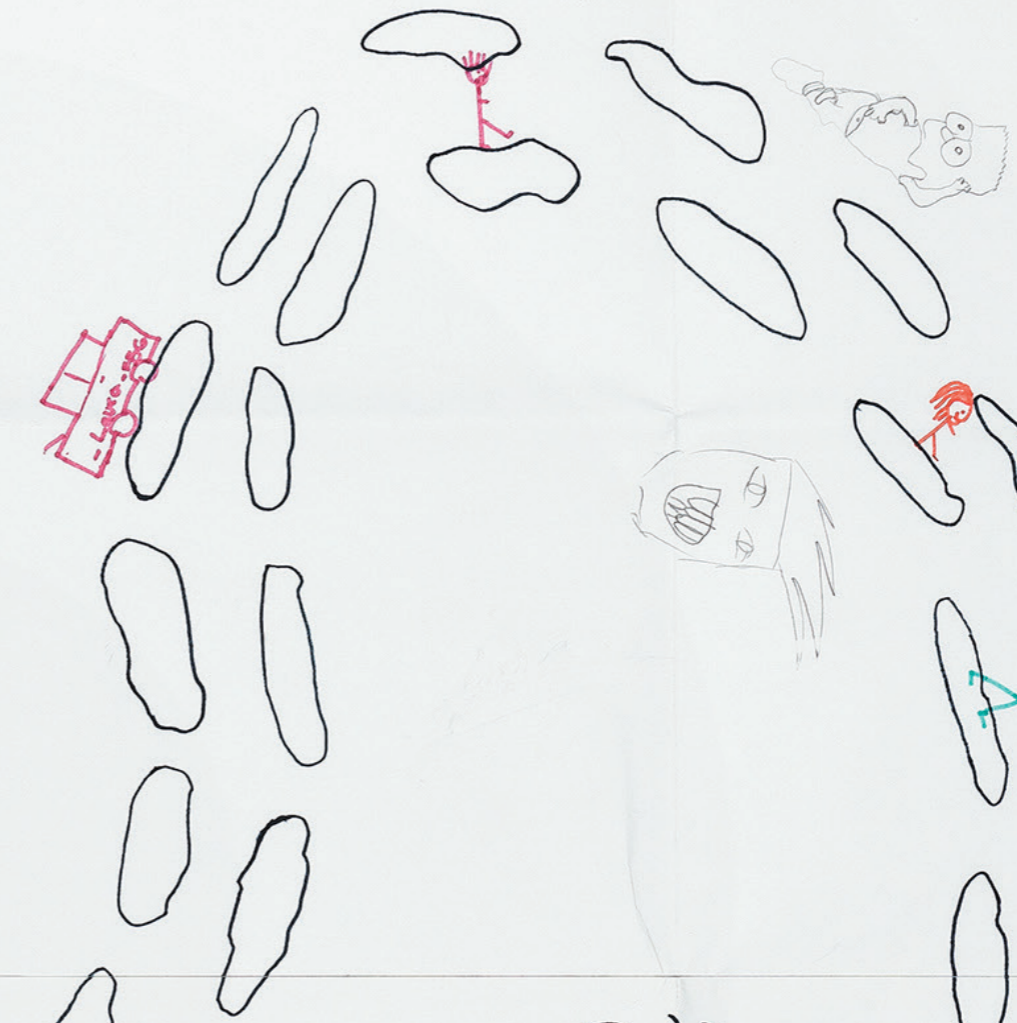
Possibilities of participation:

The young man designed, implemented and evaluated the Insta-Story with the youth workers.

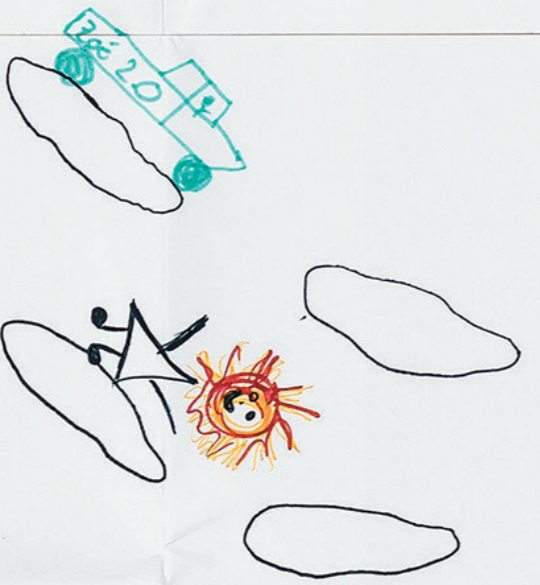
- Develop and help shape the project idea
- Implementation of the Insta-Story (with the help of the youth worker)
- Evaluation of the Insta-Story



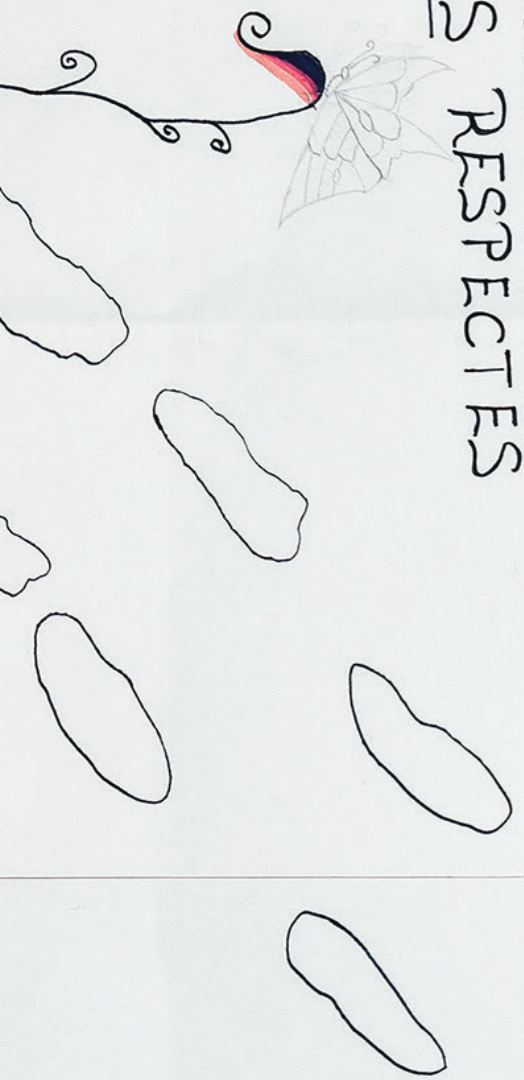
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Acknowledgements

For once, the thanks for Switzerland's first report on children and young people do not primarily go to funders or the project team, but to the many children and young people who have made the contents of this report possible in some form or other and within the scope of their possibilities.

Thanks to all those who have participated in the discussions, who have stood up for the concerns of children and young people and who have expressed differentiated opinions on preliminary drafts of the report.

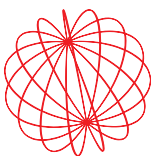
Thank you!

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Endnotes

- 1 Exceptions are the services of the detached child and youth work as well as the workshop with the children who do not live in the family of origin. Both took place in existing, heterogeneous groups.
- 2 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIntro.aspx>
- 3 See box with pilot project 2019, p. 7, Link to the report: https://www.netzwerk-kinderrechte.ch/resources/190701_Netzwerk-Kinderrechte-Schweiz_Kinder-und-Jugendinput-LOIPR2.pdf
- 4 The quotes from children and adolescents used in the report have been anonymized and are presented under an alternative name. The age and gender of the children correspond to the information provided.
- 5 One exception is the canton of Glarus, which has lowered the voting age to 16.
- 6 KESB: Child and Adult Protection Authority in Switzerland
- 7 If a large number of young people collect signatures on a particular issue, it can be handed over to the municipal government, which will treat it like a parliamentary proposal - i.e. it will respond to it. The young people are free to choose the topic and the time, nationality does not play a role. If the municipal parliament approves the motion, the order is even binding. Examples: [Thun](#), [Burgdorf](#), [Uster](#), [Bern](#).
- 8 UBS Optimus Foundation (2018): [Endangerment of the best interests of the child in Switzerland. Forms, help and professional and political implications.](#)
- 9 Swiss Society for Paediatrics (2020): [National Child Protection Statistics 2019.](#)
- 10 Schöbi, Holmer, Rapicault und Schöbi (2020): [Punishment behaviour of parents in Switzerland.](#) Institute for Family Research University of Fribourg.
- 11 In Switzerland, according to the Federal Supreme Court, corporal punishment is only prohibited under criminal law if it "goes beyond what is accepted by society". However, other countries have an explicit ban on violence in education (e.g. Sweden, Germany or France).
- 12 Averdijk, Margrit et. al. (2013): [Recommendations for Reduction of Sexual Violence between Teenagers. Recommendations for Reduction of Sexual Violence between Teenagers. A Contribution from a Professional Perspective.](#)
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- 19 The Federal Youth Session 2019 sent a request for a change in this practice to the Swiss Conference for Social Welfare (SKOS).
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- 22 State Secretariat for Migration (2019): [Statistics UMA](#), Figures Save the Children Switzerland (2019), based on asylum statistics State Secretariat for Migration (2019).
- 23 [Documents from Education 21](#); UN Convention on the Rights of the Child [Summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by UNICEF](#) (order Leaflet free of charge from UNICEF Switzerland); [Convention on the Rights of the Child explained](#) (UNICEF). (order Printed version for CHF 6.00 at UNICEF Switzerland)
- 24 Tausenfreund, Tim et. al. (2020): [Children's Worlds National Report Switzerland.](#) ZAHW.
- 25 The group is made up of participants from the 2020 National Children's Conference and former participants from the 2019 Federal Youth Session.
- 26 Throughout the project, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendations for the participation of children and young people in the UN reporting process were central. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2014): [Working methods for the participation of children in the reporting process of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.](#) These recommendations had to be implemented in the respective participation forums. Child Rights Network Switzerland provided them as a basis for the project partners in the form of a guideline. The latter served as an orientation for the project implementers and facilitated the comparability of the results with an example catalogue of child rights issues.
- 27 Caviezel Schmitz S. und Krüger P. (2020): [Children's lives in Corona times. First findings on the health and behavior of children in Switzerland during the pandemic.](#)
- 28 UN (2020): [Policy Brief The Impact of Covid-19 on Children.](#)



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