

Report Voice 16+.  
June 2008

Hello everybody,

My name is Jona and I represent Voice 16+. Does it remember you anything? We are groups of children led by children and we operate in Elbasan, Durrës and Peshkopi. Our aim is to protect and demand the observance of the convention on the rights of the child. Today, as one year ago, we are here to present you some of the achievements and problems related to the implementation of the national strategy for children.

We have achieved to be consultants of the municipality councils on children's issues; we have been engaged in the participatory budget process; we have cooperated with other NGOs working for children's rights and with children's governments. Actually, as result of our work, the problem of using the students to keep order in the school during the teaching process and to clean up the school was solved in four schools of the Dibra district and in Durrës and Elbasan we achieved to be part of the cooperation for the construction of the child protection office. We developed questionnaires and realized surveys through which we measured the level of children's rights observance in schools. We will present the results of this process here today, but we also aim at building our contribution for the alternative report on the CRC observance for the Geneva Committee. The surveys carried out in the Durrës district schools (with **250** students in **5** schools) focused on children's rights observance in general. In Elbasan (with **420** students, **120** parents, more than **100** responsible teachers, **5** coordinators of CGs and **12** teachers of the activities in **10** schools) we focused on the problem of the reflection of children's rights in the extracurricular activities and in Dibra (with **420** students in **6** schools) on the teacher-student relation.

From the analysis of the results of these surveys unfortunately we observe that our rights continue to be violated. More concretely, the problems arisen are as follows:

- ❖ In the schools, **violence is still present against children; a phenomenon that is noticed in the relations teacher-students but even more among children**. This indicates an incorrect communication in the schools.
- ❖ In most of the **cases of violence against them**, children call on their parents, teachers and headmasters, avoiding the child structures such as **Children's Governments, which are almost totally passive in the high schools in Dibra and in the 9-year schools in Elbasan and Durrës**.
- ❖ Also, in the **Dibra** district schools, about 300 children of 420 asked stated that **teachers do not evaluate them objectively** with regards to their knowledge for the following reasons:
  - lack of a relevant qualification and education of teachers,
  - personal favors because of certain interests towards some children,
  - **favors because of the academic results**.

So, it is observed that the relation that the teacher has with a student has a strong influence in the evaluation with marks. Perturbing and strange is the report indicating that almost **44%** of the students that have been asked **do not know** that there is a psychologist in their school yet. About **1** in **10** students who have called on the psychologist declare that they haven't had any support by him.

- ❖ The reports of the **Elbasan** surveys show that half of the students and a large part of the teachers inquired have never read the CRC. Only 4% of the activities on children's rights are initiated by children, which indicates the low level of their inclusion in decision-making. Only 20% of the parents take part in Children's Rights activities, while admitting that they often violate these rights. We would also like to remind you that, last year, the survey in the Elbasan schools raised the problem of schools heating, which is still unsolved in spite the good cooperation with the town's municipality. 55% of the parents state that the school conditions are unacceptable and demand their improvement.
- ❖ In Durrës, making a comparison with the last year's survey, it is noticed a higher awareness of children with regards to their rights. But there is still violation of children's rights, which during this year is reported to be at 46.2% with regards to the exercising of various forms of psychological violence and at 56% with regards to the exercising of physical violence.

From the presented conclusions our group proposes some recommendations:

- ❖ It is necessary to organize activities aiming at the improvement of **communication** in schools (*in order to eliminate violence*)
- ❖ **It is necessary to strengthen children's government as children structures** within the schools (trainings for them and the teachers' coordinators, of the school directors as well as of the pedagogical staff and the students).
- ❖ The problem of the **objective evaluation** of students by teachers requires attention with regards to the qualifying work for the strengthening of the scientific and professional formation of teachers, in order to increase their skills **in making objective evaluations**.
- ❖ **Child participation in decision-making** concerning the activities organized in schools **must be increased** (their type and number must be suggested by children, not by directors or teachers).
- ❖ **The number of hours of the activities concerning the introduction to CRC must be increased** (we suggest to use the free hours for this).
- ❖ We think that in the activities for children's rights it would be necessary to have the participation of **as many parents as possible** in order to encourage the knowledge on and the observance of children's rights by parents as well.
- ❖ More attention should be paid on increasing, in quantity **and quality**, the evaluating stimuli for all the students, regardless their academic achievements.
- ❖ The significant role of the psychologist in schools should be increased.

Hoping that our recommendations will be taken into consideration improving the situation with regards to children rights observance, we thank you for listening at us and we hope to meet you next year presenting more achievement and less problems.