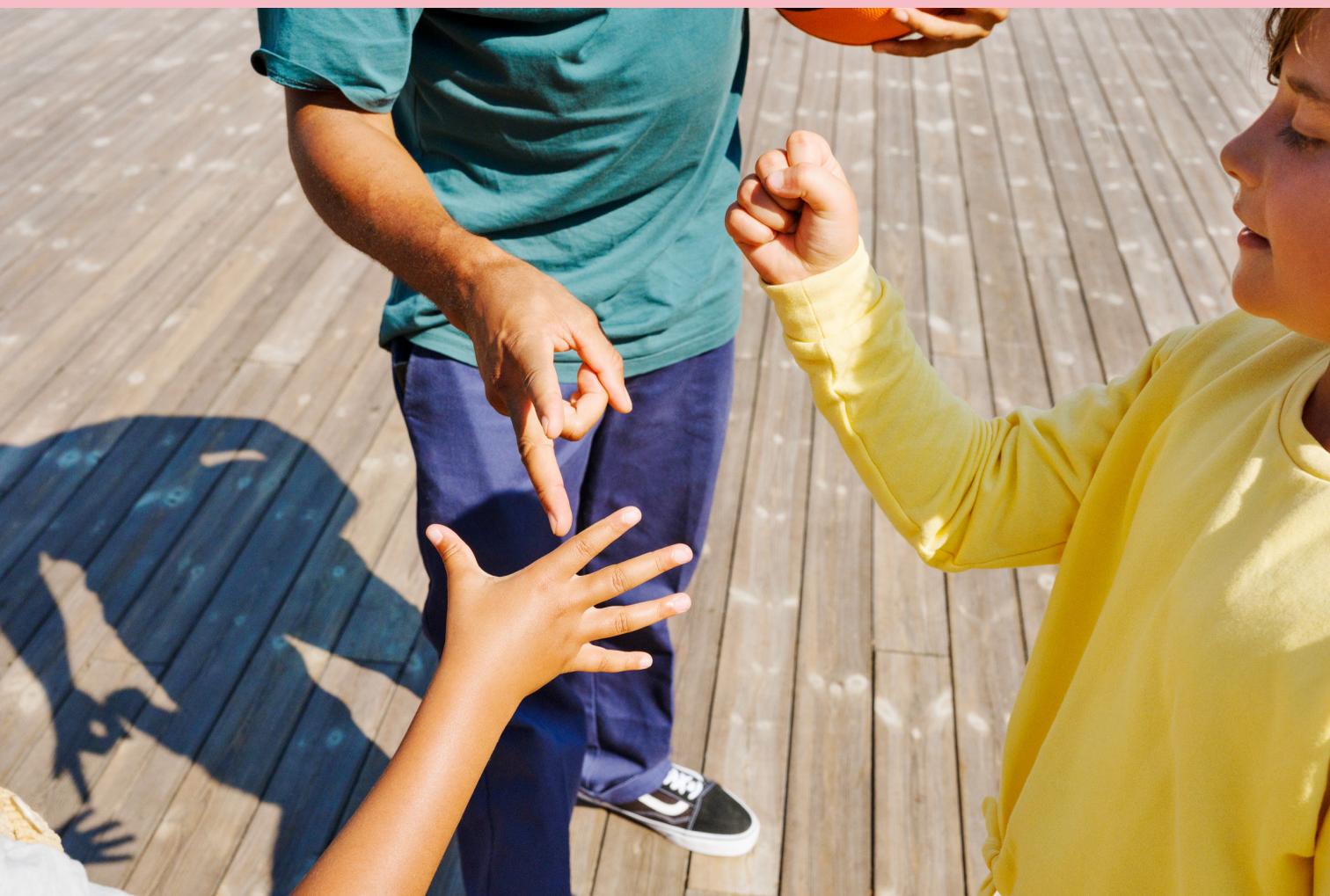


“Let’s Talk Young, Let’s Talk About Children’s Rights in decision-making”

Report from ENYA Forum 2020



Foreword

“Sometimes participation is as simple as just asking children what they think. It doesn’t always have to be very complicated”

We, the young people who have participated in the European Network of Youth Advisors (ENYA) Forum 2020, call upon the European Network of Ombudspersons for children (ENOC), our national or regional Ombudspersons for children/ Children’s Commissioners, our governments, EU, Council of Europe and other relevant stakeholders to follow up our recommendations.

According to article 12 of the UNCRC, children and young people have the right to be heard and their opinions should be given due weight. Therefore, our recommendations are also important for the work that lies ahead in promoting Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIIA) and child participation. We have made

recommendations on CRIIA which is ENOC’s annual topic for 2020. A big part of this is to give recommendations about how children and young people can participate. For both topics we wish to emphasize the importance of having a rights-based approach and remind the states’ duty to fulfil, protect and promote our rights according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We believe that there is a big need for raising awareness of children’s rights, CRIIA and participation at all levels, among children, young people and adults. In order to fulfil these rights, information and education are key, along with free speech.

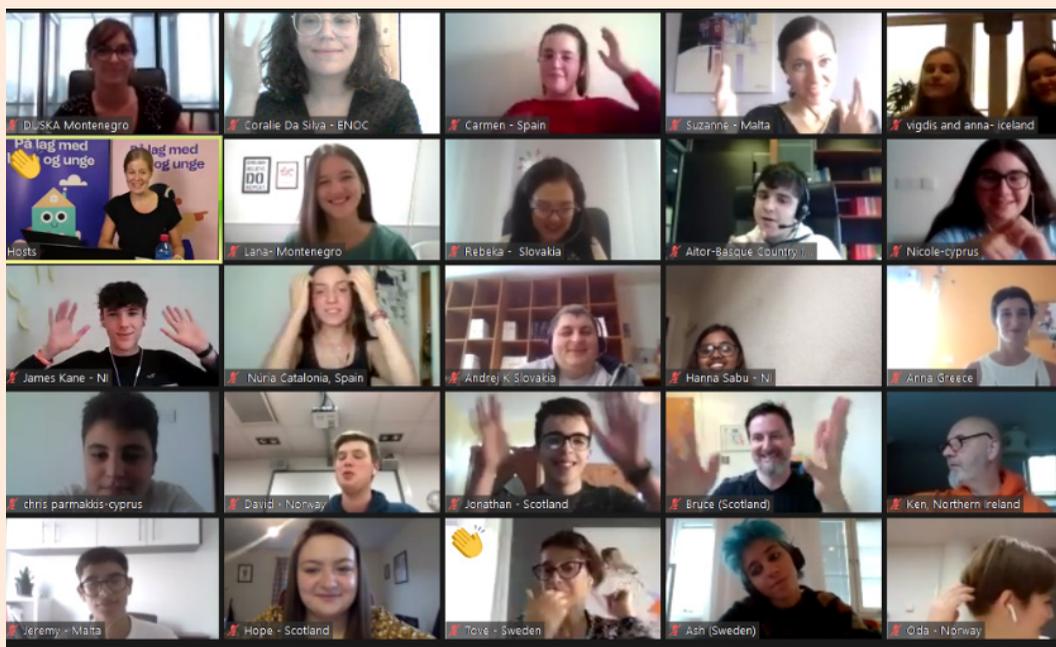


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Introduction

ENYA 2020 “Let’s Talk Young, Let’s Talk About Children’s Rights in decision-making” child participation project aims at providing a forum for the expression of children and young people’s views and concerns regarding how to ensure the protection and promotion of their rights, and how to involve them in the development of legislation, policies and decisions that affect them.

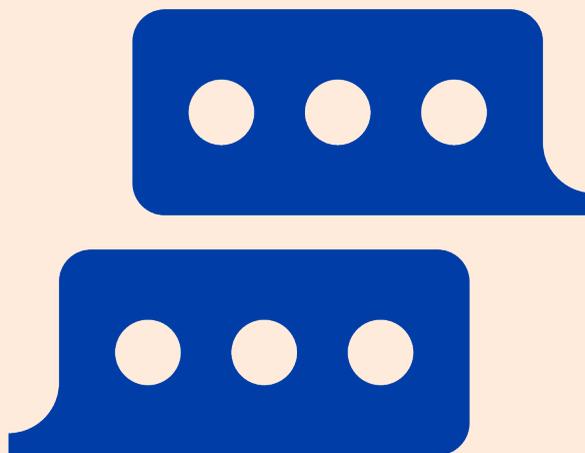
Young people from 13 countries/regions participated in the event:

- Andalusia
- Basque country
- Catalonia
- Cyprus
- Greece
- Iceland
- Malta
- Montenegro
- Northern Ireland
- Norway
- Slovakia
- Scotland
- Sweden

Between February and October 2020, ENYA country teams have conducted several meetings and activities, most of them online due to the COVID19 crisis, where young people expressed views and opinions on Child Rights Impact Assessment.

The main purpose was to consult children and young people about how they see their involvement in CRIAs and how CRIAs should be conducted in a right-based and child-friendly manner where children and young people’s views remain central. Child participation has therefore been an important topic addressed at the Forum.

The ENYA country teams have also worked with the rights of LGBTIQ+ as a supporting topic to make CRIA less abstract for the young people. This topic has been used as a case study, to discuss to what extent this is a question of children’s rights and understand how CRIA can be used as a tool.



ENYA Forum – what and how?

This year's ENYA Forum held place at October 3rd- 4th. Norway was the host for the digital forum and welcomed the young people to virtual Oslo.

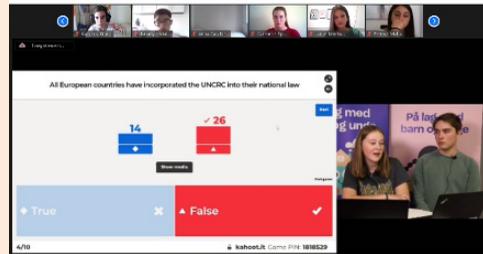
At the ENYA Forum, country/region teams discussed various aspects of CRIA, child participation and rights of LGBTIQ+ children, and worked on a set of common recommendations on these three topics.

Country/region teams presented their domestic recommendations and discussed various aspects of CRIA, child participation and rights of LGBTIQ+ children. Indeed, one of the main purposes of the project was to consult children and young people about how they see their involvement in CRIAs, and more broadly in policy and decision-making processes. Children's participation has therefore been an important topic discussed.

During the ENYA Forum the young people had to assess the impact on children's rights of a new law about the rights of LGBTIQ+ children through an Escape game. LGBTIQ+ children's rights was chosen as a supporting topic to make CRIA less abstract for the young people. This topic has been used as a case study to understand how CRIA can be used as a tool.

The young people then worked and agreed on a set of common recommendations on the three above mentioned topics, using the Mural software for brainstorming.

The ENYA young people participated in the ENOC Annual Conference on 16-17 November 2020.



Recommendations on Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA)

1. The states should make CRIA mandatory and raise the awareness of it

The states should make CRIA mandatory and incorporate the UNCRC into domestic legislation

- Introduce legislation to oblige decision makers to conduct CRIAs. CRIAs should be mandatory whenever decisions that affect children are made, both for public and private sectors

Have campaigns to increase the awareness of CRIAs

- Use of activism and social media to campaign for awareness on need for CRIA
- The government should increase the awareness about children's rights by campaigns in school for children and parents

2. CRIAs must be based on a broad range of articles, up-to-date and relevant statistics, and child-friendly information must be provided.

Have a broad perspective about what articles are relevant in a CRIA, not just the obvious ones

- Include different perspectives and assess all the different articles of the UNCRC

Use up-to-date and relevant statistics

- Conduct nationwide surveys where as many children as possible need to be included in the CRIA process from all groups and especially younger ages
- Surveys should be taken to gather the views of different groups of children like those of the minorities, so that adults can make a good decision reflecting young people's views

- Ensure research about rights issues is up-to-date and conducted properly

Provide child-friendly information

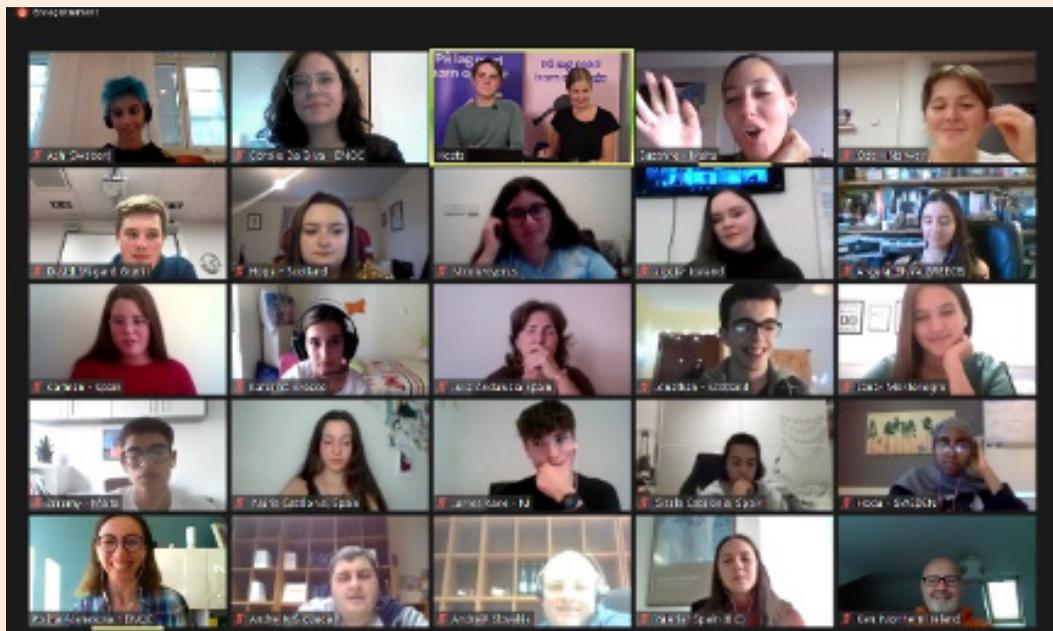
- Adaptations should be made to make sure that information is accessible and written in a child-friendly way so that all children and young people can participate, including those with additional support needs
- Regularly updated online pages with information to help children understand what's happening at governmental level and the impact of decisions affecting them

3. Children and young people must be involved in CRIAs and Child Rights Impact Evaluations (CRIEs)

The government should make sure that children are involved when CRIAs are conducted

- The government, schools and other organizations working with children should always





listen to children and young people when a decision/ law affects them. Not just a tick box.

- Children should be asked about their opinion in the beginning of the process and be kept informed and involved as part of the ongoing process

Children affected should be consulted as part of the CRIA

- Involve children of all ages and abilities.
- Involve diverse groups of children when conducting a CRIA
- If a decision affects a specific group of children, they should be consulted. Need to have knowledge about these groups and the issues affecting them.

We need spaces where children can be involved in CRIAs

- For every CRIA, create an accessible safe space where children can share their views
- Schools and governments should make sure there are different arenas and platforms

where young people can express themselves in matters concerning them, for instance through student councils and youth parliaments

- Establishment of an experts' group that assesses the impact on child's rights for each draft law or ministerial decision related to the fields where children are affected. The group will include experts depending on the topic of the draft law/ministerial decision, a representative of the Children's Ombudsperson and representative from ENYA Youth Advisory Board or a National Youth Council working in the national Parliament
- Countries should put in place youth parliaments made by young people elected by their peers. If youth parliaments exist in a country, they should be actually listened to. Children should elect the representatives to the youth parliament
- Children should talk directly to government about their opinions as this will bring creativity

Give us good feedback and show that our opinions matter

- Feedback to children and young people on the result of the CRIA
- Discussions between adults and young people to find out what happens next with the information

Young people should be involved in evaluation of laws and policies (CRIE)

- Young people should be able to take part in the evaluation of new policies and decisions taken
- Once a year, children themselves should be able to review legislation governments have carried out and review if they are effective

4. Young people must be educated about children's rights, including CRIA

We need training and education about children's rights and CRIA

- Need for more human rights education for young people to realise the impact on children's rights in decision-making.
- More education needed for children on what CRIA is
- It is necessary to explain what CRIA means

An adult with knowledge about CRC to cooperate with students

- All schools should have a student representative that cooperates with someone employed at the school with good knowledge about children's rights

5. Adults must be educated about the CRC and CRIA

Need for more Human rights education for adults to realise the impact on children's rights in decision-making

- Authorities should educate public employees and decision-makers at all levels about how to conduct a CRIA and educate them

about children's rights in general. It should also be evaluated how they use the UNCRC

- All those who work with children should be fully informed about CRIAs. Train school staff, civil society, adult decision makers and public employees on how to carry out CRIAs

The UN Committee on the rights of the child and the EU should train governments

- International organisations, especially the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the EU, should train national governments on CRIA. Then national governments can train local governments and lower down decision makers

6. Adults need to respect children's opinions and be open-minded

Adults need to be more open minded and realise that they do not necessarily know everything about children's rights, therefore children's opinions should be included when a decision concerning children will be taken

- Adults shouldn't judge children and must show that they have listened to them
- Adults shouldn't try to influence the children's views
- Treat children's opinions as equal to adults' opinions
- Governments should remember that children are the future so they should have a voice in things that will affect them, not only in the present but in the future as well

7. Children's Commissioners and Ombudspersons should play a role in CRIAs

Voice the opinion of children

- Children's Commissioners and Ombudspersons should voice the opinions of children during the legislative process, so that CRIA is carried out from the very start
- Commissioners and Ombudspersons for Children should advocate for the young pe-

ople, especially those who can't advocate for themselves

Provide training and challenge governments

- Independent Ombudspersons for children and Commissioners can conduct the training and have a wider scope to challenge the government

8. Need to be consequences if a CRIA is missing, not used or incomplete

The authorities must strike down on the lack of children rights assessments in matters that affect children and young people and there should be places where this can be reported

- Young people should have the option to protest to encourage governments to do a CRIA
- The government must make sure to use the impact assessment - don't just put it in a drawer
- Funding needs to follow the needs but should not be limited to that whenever possible



Topics were CRIAs should be conducted

- Decisions about budget
- The Education system and curriculum (should be revised to include more relevant skills and topics)
- The effect of Covid-19 on children's rights, particularly their right to education - emergencies are not excuses to ignore children's rights
- Focus groups need to be carried out to address certain challenges such as hate speech
- The modernization and improvement of educational and recreational material in the classrooms about bullying
- The design and development of leisure centres/ facilities and activities
- Buildings being constructed and transport - things that are carried out by their councils

Recommendations on children's right to participation



-Slide showing what the young people at ENYA Form thought was the biggest barriers to participation

1. Need to improve access to participation for all children and young people

More possibilities for participation for children and young people

- Increase the opportunities and have reach-out groups for child-participation, for instance in schools to reach those who don't come forward; conduct surveys as a means to involve a wider range of children in decisions that concern them
- Provide more opportunities for children and young people to ask questions to the government
- Increase participation of children in the mass media such as TV
- Identify an adult who on a daily basis can take the time to listen and discuss the needs

of young people. Create a sort of safe environment where you can go to express your opinions to help make progress

Encourage children from a young age to participate

- Encourage children of a young age to participate in decision making and be responsible for it themselves

Ensure access for all young people, including vulnerable groups

- All children need to be listened to and able to participate, including those with special requirements such as care experienced young people, those with special needs and young carers

- Provide extra support and protection for the participation of vulnerable groups, for instance LGBTIQ+ children and disabled children
- Better physical access so people with disabilities can participate. Teachers also need to talk more about disabilities to destigmatize them

2. Participation should be on children and young people's terms

Age-appropriate (child-friendly) language

- Adults, including politicians and bureaucrats, must adapt their language so that children and young people understand it. Difficult and bureaucratic language makes it hard for children and young people to understand what is said or written
- The language needs to be age appropriate. Child-friendly language is not the same as childish. There are differences between younger and older children when it comes to the language that should be used

Create safe spaces

- To create a safe space for participation you need to have respect for everyone, be able to communicate in ways that young people understand, treat everyone equally and make sure people feel safe
- Young people should be able to disagree, express their opinions freely and also compare with others
- Be respectful of different gender identities

Facilitate in appropriate ways

- Ensure that the engagement process is appropriate for the age and ability of the participants
- Don't rush it
- Use creative workshops, conferences and social media where young people can express their opinions through different mediums and can be better understood. The creations can be presented through the media

Feedback and accountability

- Give feedback to validate the effect of child participation
- Regular updates and motivation so that children are not discouraged
- Transparent; must be understandable for all and everyone must be open and honest
- Consistent; opinions must be taken into account and contact must be kept
- Respect, we must be treated as equals
- Publicise the opinions of participating groups to put pressure on the politicians to follow them

3. Provide information and education for young people

Information about rights and how children can participate

- Governments should ensure young people know and understand their rights in order to increase participation. Children should be informed on the different ways they can participate and influence different matters
- Schools, local community and government should let children know that their voice matters and that their opinions are respected and implemented in decision making
- Politics, democracy and involvement in society should play a bigger role in school and everyday school life
- Social media should be used to let young people know about their rights, and opportunities to share their opinions

Educate young people about participation

- Educate children about their rights so they are able to express themselves further Within education young people should have access to resources about participation
- Young people should get help to become involved. They must know about opportunities to get involved
- Teach the community, how the individual role is important and how participation can start a chain of events leading to progress

- Schools must facilitate and encourage political engagement by making political absence from school a valid reason
- Give children and young people knowledge about harassment and domination techniques and how to face them

4. Educate and make adults aware of children's rights to meaningful participation

Rights education and training

- Training for government officials
- Local and national authorities must be made aware of children's participation
- Check the real needs of children when planning a project to make it more effective

Bad attitude and behaviour from adults must be stopped

- Take child participation seriously. Make sure adults/ governments listen to young people and the councils/ youth parliaments
- Adults should make time to listen to young people, keep an open mind and make sure participation is purposeful. Tokenistic participation should be avoided
- Adults don't always care enough about young people's participation within decision making.
- Young people should be able to access a wide variety of participation opportunities without facing repercussions

5. Create digital platforms for participation

More platforms for young people to share their opinions, for instance youth media channels, social media or councils.

- Create social media accounts connected to relevant institutions that can create an easily accessible platform where children can be involved. Children are not always aware of the importance of their voice and views
- Create online platforms for participation awareness of CRC



Digital platform for all European countries where young people can discuss a variety of topics and connect with each other

- Everyone has a blog to put your ideas, problems and personal stories
- Debate teams with other countries
- Youth leadership where they handle all the problems
- Mandatory funding by the government

6. More youth led participation

Establish youth parliaments and youth councils

- Youth parliament and local youth council structures are good practices to put in place
- Create young people institutions, for example a parliament or council for young people and their ideas will later be passed on to the actual parliament. The youth parliament or young people institution should have the right to speak in the parliament
- Young people should lead and participate in local leaderships
- Establish local county councils of young people where they can comment on how the local authorities affect youths. These should be mandatory for local authorities to establish.
- Allow young people to participate in all areas that affect them, for instance health, environment, housing, leisure and free time. The rest of society should know these areas are important to young people

Provide networks for groups of young people to consult with other young people

- Ensure links with local, national and international stakeholders. Have connection with each other to make informed decisions together. Compare with other youth parliaments too.
- Groups of young people to consult with other young people and to approve on government decisions. Regular meetings with relevant members.

Standards for student councils and youth councils

- Enhancements of existing structures for participation such as student councils/ youth parliaments
- Student councils should be made more effective. Guiding and reviewing school councils to make sure child participation is effective

- Develop standards for effective youth participation in councils and consultation. Propose possible legislation and European Standard for Student Councils

7. Voting rights for young people should be assessed in the different countries

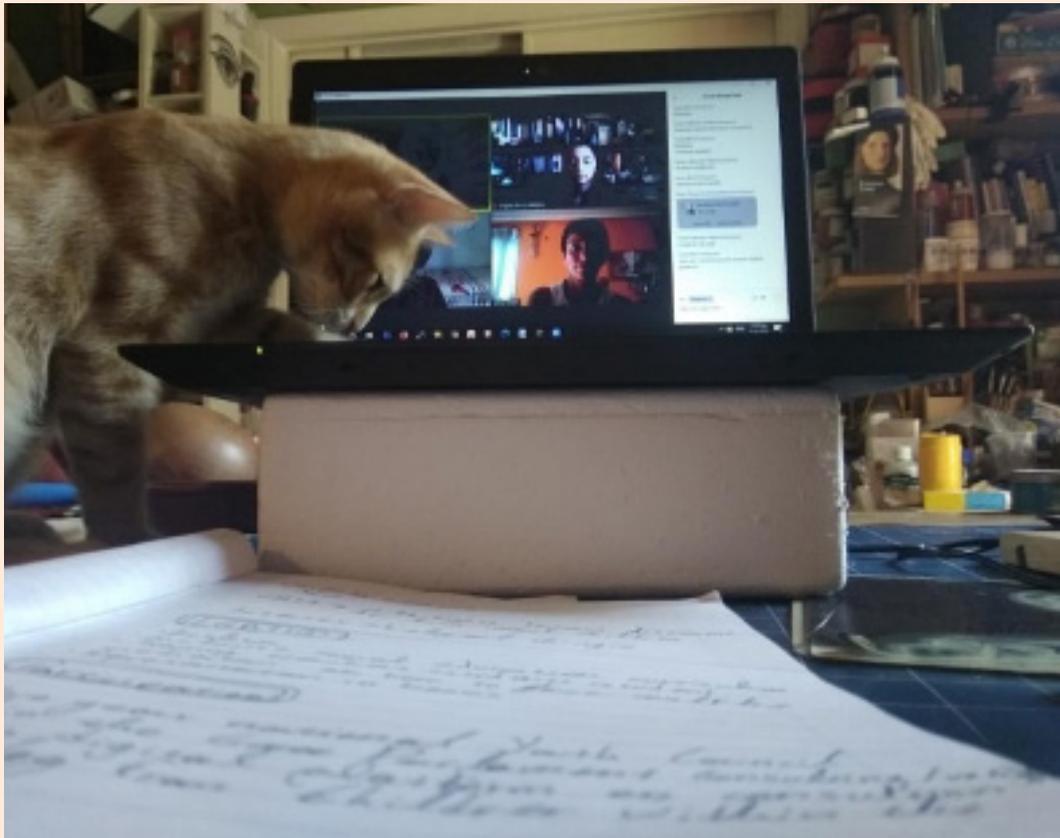
- Right to vote for 16-year olds



Important topics

Young people should be able to participate in topics that will affect them such as education, health, environment, housing, leisure and free time.

The rest of society should know these areas are important to young people



Recommendations on LGBTIQ+



Non-exhaustive list of rights in the CRC relevant to LGBTIQ+

- Art. 4 – Implementation of rights (making rights real)
- Art. 2 – Non-discrimination
- Art. 3 – Best interests of the child
- Art. 6 - Right to life, survival and development
- Art. 12- Right to be heard and respect for children’s views
- Art. 5 – Evolving capacities and family life
- Art. 8 - Preserving and protecting young people’s identity
- Art. 13 – Freedom of expression
- Art. 14 - Freedom of religion and thoughts
- Art. 15 - Freedom of assembly – setting up and join groups
- Art. 16 – Protection of privacy
- Art. 17 – Access to information and protection from harmful information
- Art. 19 – Protection from violence, including for instance bullying, hate speech
- Art. 22 – Rights for refugee children
- Art. 23 – Rights for children with disabilities
- Art. 24 – Health
- Art. 28 and 29 – Access to education and aims of education
- Art. 31- Rest, play, culture and arts
- Art. 34 – Protection from sexual abuse and exploitation
- Art. 36 – Protection from exploitation affecting their well-being
- Art. 42 – Everyone must know children’s rights

Recommendations:

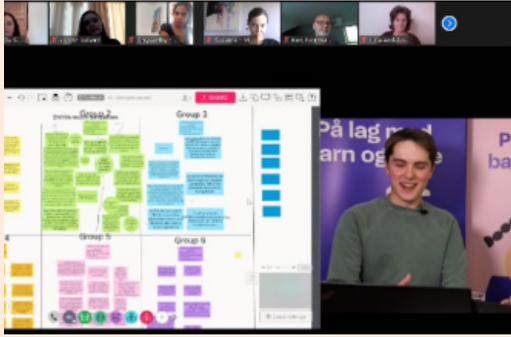
1. Safeguard LGBTIQ+ children’s rights

Provide rights-based information and education

- Mainstream rights-based education including on the UNCRC and make it mandatory but interesting with speakers who have knowledge and experience. The Ministry of Education should be responsible for such education
- LGBTIQ+ children and young people should be aware of their rights
- Organisations that can produce child-friendly information on the law and UNCRC regarding LGBTIQ+ are important to support

Promote and protect LGBTIQ+ rights

- Ensure freedom of expression in schools such as no uniforms and different hairstyle allowed. Need for the elimination of stereotypes
- Extra measures to prevent discrimination against LGBTIQ+ children
- Laws to enforce better respect and protection of LGBTIQ+ children’s identity, to avoid discrimination in school, sports etc
- Legal remedies for rights violations should be in place



- Provide safe spaces for expression. Make it accessible for children to express themselves (electronic devices, mailboxes in school, parliament). This should be done by schools, local communities and peer supporters
- Make changes in laws that affect the LGBTIQ+ community. The government should do CRIsAs and change laws when they negatively impact LGBTIQ+ children

Ban conversion therapy

- The government should ban conversion therapy with an extra focus on protecting children

Support groups and organizations to protect and lobby for LGBTIQ+ rights

- It is important to support groups and people in society who are willing to protest for LGBTIQ+ rights, especially if governments are conservative
- There is a need for organisations to put forward and lobby for the rights of LGBTIQ+ children that are set up by governments to deal with discrimination. These organisations should have trained professionals with experience so that children would feel comfortable to come forward

2. Education

Give priority to sexual education, that must include LGBTIQ+ rights

- Introduce sexual education in schools from a young age. Curriculum for sex education is important

- Parents and schools should start educating kids from a young age about LGBTIQ+ in an age-appropriate way
- Sexual education in schools should be mandatory and ongoing and should include all sexual orientations. In some countries there is sexual education, but it is not enough
- Strengthen sexual education, with a focus on more knowledge about LGBTIQ+, create accepting and understanding attitudes and learn about all sexual orientations, not only straight sex
- The education should include gender identity, sexuality and sexual health and take away the heterosexual focus on sex education in schools, if this exists
- The government should add classes on how to use pronouns and respect, inclusive sex education, more representative history lessons where LGBTIQ+ rights, the movement and the sexuality of many important historical figures are included
- Creating education programs that work on sensitivity and acceptance. Need to analyse situations and people's attitudes

Mainstream LGBTIQ+ positive content in schools

- Education should normalise LGBTIQ+ issues by demonstrating its normality and that identifying as LGBTIQ+ should not cause shame, and by presenting examples to prevent this. Examples in books and textbooks could achieve this by making LGBTIQ+ people more visible
- History classes should include LGBTIQ+ issues as they have always existed, but we do not know about them as they were hidden. Classes should include prominent figures in history that were LGBTIQ+ and give examples of successful LGBTIQ+ people
- Religion should not be taught in a certain way in schools as it can negatively impact how children think about LGBTIQ+

Peer education

- More peer-education (by young people, for young people) to create a safe space, and get help and support from a friend. We think that children would be more open with their peers, rather than with adults who have authority
- Groups of pupils trained and sufficiently supported by teaching staff on how to establish a relationship of trust with their peers and become persons of reference in case violations occur

Training for teachers

- Train and educate people who work with young people - teachers, parents - so that they can effectively provide support for LGBTIQ+ children. The existence of conservative teachers and parents can be a problem for the children
- More education for teachers. This should be done through co-operation workshops and part of the education should be delivered by young people

Educate parents

- Yearly lessons for parents where they are taught how they should react if their children come out
- Parents could be educated by using examples, roleplay, and discussions (“what would you do in the situation?”)

3. Healthcare and support

Healthcare inequalities should be addressed

- Provide mental, emotional, physical healthcare for all LGBTIQ+ children. The government should address health inequality for LGBTIQ+ children and young people
- Need for extra measures from the government when it comes to maintaining a good mental health among LGBTIQ+ people
- Government must guarantee access for LGBTIQ+ children to free healthcare which is adjusted to their specific needs and situations

Ensure easy access to professional help for LGBTIQ+ children

- School should counsel children and help them come to terms with their sexuality/gender identity
- Schools, youth services or local councils should have a peer group for LGBTIQ+ people as peer support
- Provide access to consultation with psychologists and make it mandatory to have psychologists in every school to support and provide appropriate consultation when necessary. There should be a sex clinic that comes into schools
- Anonymous suggestion box, for problem solving

Ensure access to helplines

- There should be a hotline if LGBTIQ children need someone to turn to
- Create hotlines for victims and witnesses of abuse and bullying. Listen to and support victims of abuse, for example by creating safe spaces where abuse victims can go (and use knowledge from the victims to help others)



4. Bullying

Children must stand up against LGBTIQ+ related bullying

- Young people should stand up against bullying and not participate or be part of bullying acts such as sharing of hateful content

Better support for children being bullied

- There should be support structures in schools to help and guide children and young people who are being bullied
- There is a need for more support and effort to tackle bullying and to help both the one bullying and the one who is bullied. Schools should take responsibility for extra protection for LGBTIQ+ children
- Introduce stricter punishment for bullying of LGBTIQ+ children and young people
- Anonymous questionnaire done once per year by an independent expert team to evaluate cases of bullying and communication between students and teachers and find solutions

Work on attitudes and awareness raising

- Awareness raising and talks in schools about respect. Empathy-building is important
- Reinforce positive education since a lot of the times the hate is due to ignorance. There should not be fines for using slurs

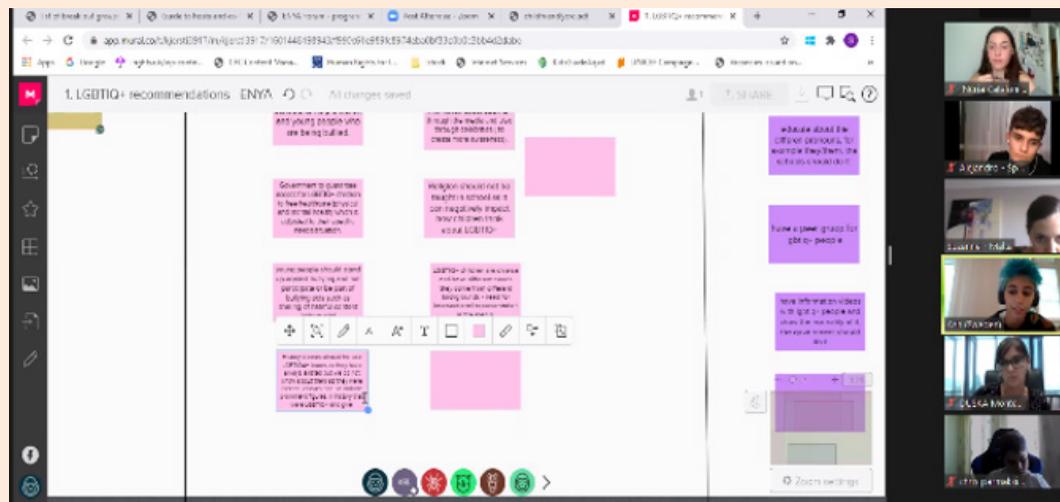
5. Change attitudes through awareness raising and “normalization” of LGBTIQ+ people

Acceptance for diversity

- We should not put people in categories such as on forms, etc. Need for acceptance of all young people no matter what
- Need to normalise and educate about different pronouns, for example they/them. There should be public awareness campaigns, including in schools

More diverse representation in media

- There is a need for intersectional and not so stereotypical representation in the media. LGBTIQ+ children are diverse, come from different backgrounds and have different needs and this should be shown
- Include more LGBTIQ+ people in theatre and arts and remove the stereotypes. The film industry could make films such as James Bond including LGBTIQ+ characters
- Media organisations could work to share this information with older generations through radio, TV, newspapers etc
- More diverse representations in literature/schoolbooks, magazines, posters, movies, including through the addition of other representations of couples and family versions with more diversity, especially in school curriculum



Use of social media for information and awareness raising

- Normalise LGBTIQ+ people in society. Young people are more progressive in this sense through their increased ability to access information on these issues through social media and the internet
- Teach about these issues, not just through lessons, but also using Instagram and other engaging methods for young people
- Improve access to correct information about LGBTIQ+ through the media and also through celebrities to create more awareness
- The government should raise visibility of LGBTIQ+ young people through public information campaigns. For instance, by having information videos with LGBTIQ+ people and show the normality of it
- Develop acceptance-inducing campaigns on social media to build good attitudes on a national level, with the use of experts and proper knowledge.

6. Transgender children

Acknowledge transgender children and their identity

- Governments in all countries must acknowledge transgender people and their identity, as well as transgender people's need to learn, explore, and unfold their own identity

Better health treatments for transgender children and young people

- Authorities have to offer young people who identify as transgender a better treatment option on their own terms, so that they can get the help they need

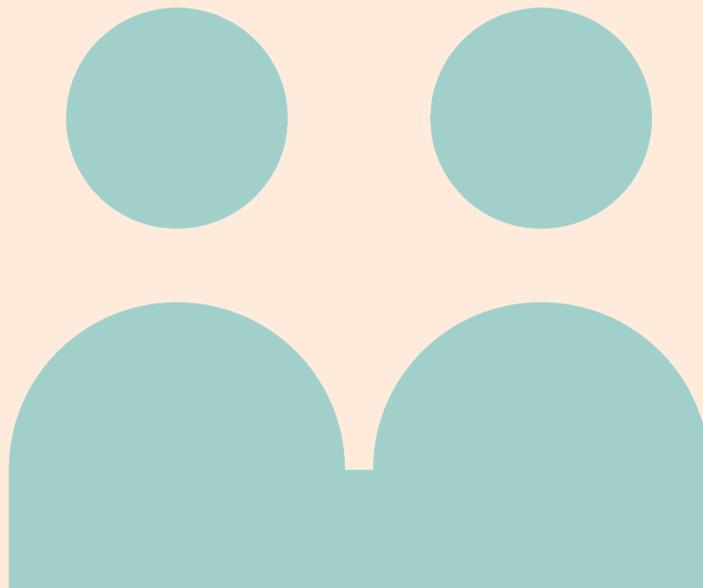
Provide gender neutral toilets

- All public institutions for children and young people must have gender neutral toilets, changing and dressing rooms

7. Statistics

Collect more statistics

- Mapping and getting more knowledge and statistics on sexuality, LGBTIQ+ people and issues connected to them
- The law must also be shaped so that this knowledge is possible to get. It must be legal to collect and provide statistics



Overview of ENYA recommendations

Recommendations to promote CRIA

1. The states should make CRIA mandatory and raise the awareness of it
2. CRIAs must be based on a broad range of articles, up-to-date and relevant statistics, and child-friendly information must be provided.
3. Children and young people must be involved in CRIAs and Child Rights Impact Evaluations (CRIEs)
4. Young people must be educated about children's rights, including CRIA
5. Adults must be educated about the CRC and CRIA
6. Adults need to respect children's opinions and be open-minded
7. Children's Commissioners and Ombudspersons should play a role in CRIAs
8. Need to be consequences if a CRIA is missing, not used or incomplete

Recommendations to promote children and young people's participation

1. Need to improve access to participation for all children and young people
2. Participation should be on children and young people's terms
3. Provide information and education for young people
4. Educate and make adults aware of children's rights to meaningful participation
5. Create digital platforms for participation
6. More youth led participation
7. Voting rights for young people should be assessed in the different countries

Recommended target areas to promote the rights of LGBTIQ' children and young people

1. Safeguard LGBTIQ+ children's rights
2. Education
3. Healthcare and support
4. Bullying
5. Change attitudes through awareness raising and "normalization" of LGBTIQ+ people
6. Transgender children
7. Statistics



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