

**“ Let’s
talk
about
my
rights! ”**

The Defender of rights’ national consultation
among under 18-year-olds



Défenseur des droits
— RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE —

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Editorial

One of the four general principles of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child is his/her right, recognised in Article 12, to express his/her opinion freely on all issues affecting him/her, and that this opinion should be taken seriously, at both individual and collective levels.

One of the four general principles of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child is his/her right, recognised in Article 12, to express his/her opinion freely on all issues affecting him/her, and that this opinion should be taken seriously, at both individual and collective levels.

The scope of this principle is wide-ranging. The right to be consulted and heard must be taken into consideration in the interpretation and implementation of all the other rights. In addition, it constitutes a substantive criterion in assessing whether a child's best interests are being taken into account. Failing to obtain a child's opinion regarding proceedings or decisions which affect him/her is deemed to be contrary to his/her interests.

Our institution, mandated by the Organic Law of 29 March 2011 to defend and promote the best interests and rights of the child, has a vital role to play in ensuring that Article 12 is being upheld.

According to General Observation No. 12 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the creation of independent human rights

institutions forms an integral part of the State's obligations to ensure that the right to be heard is upheld. The development of consultation processes within these institutions can be instrumental in providing the "right conditions for helping and encouraging children to express their opinions", and also "combating the negative attitudes which hamper the full implementation of a child's right to be heard".

However, in its final observations addressed to the French State in early 2016, the Committee on the Rights of the Child indicated that it remained concerned "at the lack of progress within France in terms of systematically ensuring that children's opinions are taken into account in all spheres of life", and particularly "the opinions of the most vulnerable and marginalised children".

This is why we have decided to include a children's consultation within our independent system for monitoring the implementation of the Committee's final observations, which we introduced in 2017; its purpose is to ensure that in carrying out our work and our missions to defend and promote rights, the words and opinions of children are taken into consideration in a structured and sustainable fashion, and that we adapt our approaches and our priorities to the realities of all children's lives, especially those who cannot access their rights.

As a symbolic gesture, we have chosen to launch our children's consultation, "J'ai des droits, entends-moi!" ("Let's talk about my rights") this year, the 30th anniversary of the

**“ To help children, you need to know what they want.
You also need to understand them. ”**

Children from the Prado Association, Bourgogne

ICRC; thanks to the support of around forty associations and institutions that are convinced of the need to give greater consideration to children's opinions, this consultation is an opportunity to involve children themselves in an assessment of the extent to which respect is paid to the rights of children within France.

Over 2,200 children and teenagers between the ages of 4 and 18 actively participated in this consultation, which was held throughout France and in Mayotte. Most of the children consulted were largely unaware of their rights and the vast majority had never been invited to give their opinion on issues that affected them.

Many of them were in vulnerable situations that required ongoing dialogue with their project supervisors in order to ensure that they were heard and understood, that solutions were found, and that this initiative was tailored to their needs, rather than the other way around.

Undoubtedly, such a consultation's strength lies in its ability to demonstrate that awareness of the law and of rights, the progressive exercise of citizenship, and the right to be heard can and should apply to all children without discrimination, and that the latter take advantage of available opportunities to speak out with intelligence and commitment.

Respect for children and their opinions implies committing ourselves to their cause and including the testimonies and proposals that result from the consultation in our various reports — starting with the annual report on the Rights of the Child which is to be submitted to the President of the Republic on 20 November. In addition, to mark this year of celebration we decided to create a dedicated website to provide access to the wealth of the children's work, reflections and creativity, and also to publish a book containing all their observations, which is to be disseminated as widely as possible.

Our thanks go to all the children and social stakeholders who were involved in this consultation with a view to giving greater consideration to the rights of the child.

Geneviève Avenard

Children's Ombudsperson,
Deputy to the Defender of Rights responsible for
the defence and promotion of children's rights

Jacques Toubon

The Defender of Rights



Jacques Toubon, The Defender of Rights

Contents

07

The Defender of Rights’ National Consultation among under 18-year-olds

What exactly is it?	08
The National Consultation’s goals	08
Who was involved in the Consultation?	10
How was the Consultation organised?	12

15

Children proposals

1. Knowledge of children’s rights in France	19
2. The right to freedom of expression and to be heard	29
3. The right to education and leisure	49
4. The right to equality	67
5. The right to the best possible state of health and the best life possible	81
6. The right to live as a family	93
7. The right to child-friendly justice	103
8. The right to be protected against all forms of violence	113
9. Children’s rights and digital technologies	123
10. Unaccompanied minors’ rights	131

137

Acknowledgements

**The Defender
of Rights'
National
Consultation
among
under
18-year-olds**

What exactly is it?

The Defender of Rights' National Consultation provided an opportunity for more than 2,200 children to have their opinions heard on the realisation of their rights, in order to help improve their effectiveness.

The National Consultation's goals

To hear

As Article 12 of the International Convention on the Rights of The Child recognises, all children have the right to be heard on all matters affecting them. Yet according to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, little

progress has been made in France with regard to systematically ensuring that children are heard on all aspects of their lives. The National Consultation's first goal is to help realise the right to be heard by creating forums for dialogue between children, those coming into contact with them, the Defender of Rights and public decision-makers, in order to enable children to become actors in realisation of their rights.

To include

Vulnerable and marginalised children, such as those taken into care by the child protection services, those living in shantytowns, squats and hostels for the homeless, child refugees and disabled children are rarely consulted on matters affecting them. Existing consultation mechanisms do not enable such children to speak out as they are not adapted to their needs or life situations and, in the end, only apply to more advantaged children. This being so, the National Consultation also seeks to **include the most vulnerable children in public decision-making**. In order to achieve this goal, the Defender of Rights drew on the field expertise of almost 50 associations aiming at protecting children in especially vulnerable situations.

To unite

The Consultation's third goal is to **bring children and adults together around best practices** allowing children to express their thoughts and opinion in an educational approach. The aim is to develop a global culture of children's rights and ensure that mechanisms enabling children to be heard evolve sustainably to become ever more effective and adapted to their purpose.

To Promote

The Consultation also provides an opportunity to inform children and adults alike on the rights of the child, the right to be heard in particular. It is essential to foster assimilation of children's rights on the part of professionals working with children, so that they become ambassadors of best practices in their turn.

To encourage

The Defender of Rights monitors France's implementation of recommendations made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In order to do so to full effect, **it must ask children for their opinions, as they are the first to be affected by any breaches of their rights.** Knowing children's opinions will enable the Institution to act in ways better adapted to their needs.

To convince

The Consultation's final goal is to remove whatever obstacles still exist among adults, bringing them to full recognition of even the youngest children's abilities and skills. The Consultation shows that children can be included in decision-making on matters that affect them and that doing so brings mutual enrichment. As the Consultation's workshops demonstrated, the right to be heard enables children to be recognised as capable of working with adults on co-construction of decisions on matters affecting them. As their capacity for discernment evolves, children can take on increasing responsibility until they finally become autonomous. The right to be heard does not mean conferring full powers on children whatever the matter in question, but it recognises **children as subjects of their own right, with their personal experience to draw on and hence able to contribute to the construction of their own lives.**

Who was involved in the Consultation?

The children

thanks to the commitment of and work carried out by over 45 associations and organisations, some 2,200 children from all over France were mobilised to make themselves heard. The associations worked to ensure that the most vulnerable children and those with the least access to their rights were given the opportunity to speak out. Most of these children had no knowledge of their rights and had never previously voiced an opinion on the subject; others, who experience violations of their rights on a daily basis, were given an opportunity to communicate their observations and requests.

Ages of children consulted

4-6 years old

9.4%

6-12 years old

26.2%

12-14 years old

48.1%

14-17 years old

16.3%

Situations of children consulted

Child Protection

25%

Foreign minors

15%

Children in squats, hostel for the homeless and shantytowns

15%

Children from the general population

(mobilised depending on their region rather than their situation)

10%

Children with PSB

10%

Imprisoned children

10%

“Activists”

10%

Disabled children

5%

70%

of the children consulted didn't know their rights and had never previously talked about them.

The Youth Advisory Committee

In order to ensure the National Consultation's success, the Children's Ombudsperson, the Defender of Rights' Deputy, was assisted by a Youth Advisory Committee composed of 10 young people. Some of them have been engaged in participation processes since their childhood, while others work at the Defender of Rights' Institution or partner associations to ensure respect of children's rights. Their experiences and commitment furthered the project's development over the course of numerous meetings with the Defender of Rights' teams, highlighting what works and what does not work to create a consultation mechanism adapted to children. In the spirit of joint construction promoted by the project, the young people concerned were also able to choose the way in which they wanted to involve themselves in the initiative. Some of them chose to coordinate and facilitate workshops held by their associations, while others contributed to creation of awareness-raising workshops and others again lent their support to organisations taking part in development of their workshops.

True to their commitments, they made the strength and originality of children's and young people's engagement clear throughout the project's development. The opportunities they have been provided with since childhood to further develop their involvement in public life should be more widespread so that all children have the possibility of exercising their rights to the full and under such good conditions.

The JADEs

The JADEs (*Jeunes Ambassadeurs des Droits auprès des Enfants* – Young Ambassadors for Children's Rights) are young civic-service volunteers at the Defender of Rights. They are tasked with raising children's awareness on their rights and promoting equality. They enable the Defender of Rights to keep in direct contact with over 60,000 children a year in order to inform, educate and protect them.

In the context of the Defender of Rights' Consultation project, a number of JADEs took part in the first workshops held by partner associations in order to raise children's awareness on their rights through activities focusing on the 12 main rights and topics selected by the children involved.

The Delegates

The Defender of Rights' Delegates provide a free local service dedicated to welcome and support anybody having problems asserting their rights. They are all experienced – in such varied fields as discrimination, foreigners' rights, social protection, ethics and children's rights – and are available at 836 reception points, so facilitating access to the Institution on the part of all sectors of the public, in particular individuals who are especially vulnerable due to situations of isolation, precarity or distance from institutions.

In the context of the Defender of Rights' Consultation project, a number of the Institution's Delegates particularly committed to respect of children's rights in France and located in areas in which our partners are active were mobilised to raise children's awareness of their rights and lend support to their thoughts on the subject.

How was the Consultation organised?

Step 1 **Launch**

The Consultation began with two days of sharing best practices on how to allow children to express their thoughts and opinion, held at the Defender of Rights' head office on 26 and 27 March 2019. Bringing together experts on children's participation and representatives of all the associations mobilised for the Consultation, the two days aimed to establish a friendly and respectful framework, respectful of children's rights, within which effective consultation could take place.

Following these two preparatory days, Consultation workshop facilitators were lent assistance in creation of workshops adapted to the needs of all the children involved, adopting an innovative, experimental approach to collect the most vulnerable children's voices. Workshop durations, facilitation techniques, numbers of children per group, techniques for collecting children's voices and the subjects to be covered were adapted to the categories of children mobilised and their interests.

Step 2

Workshops

Workshops were held and coordinated in co-construction with facilitators and children between the months of April and July 2019. Through the various experiments conducted by participating associations, the workshops shared the same objectives:

- Raising children's and adults' awareness on children's rights;
- Informing children on issues affecting them;
- Enabling children to express themselves freely on these issues;
- Giving them time to draft proposals, observations and testimonies with a view to dealing with the issues identified.

Step 3

Hearing and reading what the children had to say

The children were able to discuss their work with the Institution's representatives via participating associations, or directly with the Defender of Rights' teams or by meeting with the Children's Ombudsperson, between the months of July and November 2019.

Now, as provided for by Article 12 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, their voices should be taken into account in all decisions concerning them. It is our shared responsibility to see that the right to be heard is respected.

**Children's
proposals:
“Let's talk
about
my rights”**



Geneviève Avenard, the Defender of children with the children of *Le Secours catholique* from Souzy-La-Briche

Fore- word

All the children consulted told us of their need to express themselves and be heard by adults so that the latter could take the most appropriate and respectful decisions concerning them.

This need was expressed throughout the Consultation and in more than 276 proposals they drafted as a result. Out of respect for their work, we have reproduced each proposal as it stands.

In order to show them off to best advantage, and following the children's recommendations, we have organised them by chapter – 10 chapters covering the main rights that held the children's interest. Apart from the first two chapters, which are introductory, we have chosen to arrange chapters by order of importance, from the most to the least addressed. Such organisation helps highlight the subjects that most interested the children involved in the Consultation.

Not all of the Consultation's groups came up with written proposals. Some very young children who did not necessarily know how to write or were allophone expressed themselves instead through graphic or visual mediums, which may be viewed on the dedicated website:

entendsmoi.defenseurdesdroits.fr



Children from the group working with the International Institute of Human-Rights and Peace, Caen

Chapter 1

**Knowledge
of
the rights
of the child
in
France**

« It may be argued that there is inadequate knowledge of children's rights, all the more so if we bear in mind that the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, the founding text on the subject, was signed and ratified by our country more than 25 years ago. »

Defender of Rights, Survey on Access to Rights,
Volume 4, 2017

« Children's rights are still not well enough known by children and adults in France. Here are our proposals to help change the situation. »

Children from AEDE

The main ideas promoted

8 groups worked on this subject

40%

Making children more aware of their rights at school and in reception facilities

30%

Developing communication on the rights of the child

15%

Making children's rights a priority public policy subject

10%

Better training adults and professionals working with children on children's rights in order to improve their practices

5%

Creating Children's Ombudspersons at local level



Chapter 1

Proposals

Making children more aware of their rights at school and in reception facilities

“Increase action and testimonies by young people in order to talk about children’s rights in class, as the JADEs do.”

Child from AEDE

“We’re not given enough information on our rights. I’ve never heard them talked about at school or when I was in a shelter home before that.”

Child from SOS Children’s Villages

“I’ve never heard my rights talked about at school.”

Children from the Prado Association, Bourgogne

“Change the way in which rights are taught at school so that they’re not just one lesson among lots of others (same idea for adults).”

Child from AEDE

“Organise debates on children’s rights, including with delegates and teachers.”

Child from AEDE

“Education on rights and the law should be developed from the earliest possible age so as to facilitate understanding of others, fight against discrimination and facilitate inclusion of all in society.”

Children from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace

“Provide institutions with more tools.”

Child from SOS Children’s Villages

Developing communication on the rights of the child

“ We’d like to see more communication and advertisement on our rights and situations. We could get famous and powerful people to act as our spokespersons, for example. We could talk about them on the news so as to mobilise people in demonstrations, like the yellow vests. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ Carry out a major communication campaign (with top brands). ”

Child from AEDE

“ Show commercials and provide hotline numbers against bullying, for instance, and raise young people’s awareness. ”

Child from SOS Children’s Villages

“ Publicity campaigns should be carried out to promote children’s rights. This will encourage children to speak out. Surveys should also be conducted in lower and upper secondary schools. ”

Children from the National Association of Children’s and Youth Councils (ANACEJ)

Making children's rights a priority public policy subject

“Children's rights should be made a priority subject that elected representatives (presidents, ministers, mayors, etc.) have to speak about often.”

Child from AEDE

“Organise a Children's Rights Week rather than just a Day. Hold a national forum.”

Child from AEDE

“Add 20 November on the calendar: The anniversary of the signature of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child falls on 20 November. The date could be officially included in the calendar and we could organise events on the theme all over France.

People would come to realise that this is an important date; they would mobilise and collect funds everywhere in France.

How could this be done? Whether in the press, at school or on television, everything would focus on the subject of children's rights. Meetings, parties and charity fairs could be organised to collect funds (like the Telethon). We should sing the common anthem 'MA TERRE' that we've composed; and flags should be flown in villages with a Children's Rights logo.”

Child from La Comète

Better training adults and professionals working with children on children's rights in order to improve their practices

“ Train young parents and all professionals who work with children and young people, so that they know their rights. ”

Child from AEDE

“ Adults should be readier to listen to children. ”

Child from SOS Children's Villages

“ Develop meetings between children, young people and adults so they get to know each other better and better understand children's rights and their importance. ”

Child from AEDE

Creating Children's Ombudspersons at local level

“ Create Children’s Ombudspersons at local level: designate somebody who knows children’s rights, to be chosen by the children themselves. Someone that children could go and see. Someone who would have premises, a room in the Town Hall for example.

Their role would be to listen to children; to ensure that children’s rights are fully respected and applied at school and in leisure facilities; to act as an interlocutor you can trust, and speak to and express yourself freely; to be a bit like a school nurse; to be as close to children as possible; to intervene in all classes.

How could this be done? The Ombudsperson could be elected by the children every 6 years, on November 20th. Real elections should be held and the Ombudsperson should be included in the Municipal Council along with 1 or 2 children to present projects. ”

Children from La Comète

ÉTAGEONS NOS VALEURS!



LA SEULE CHOSE
QU'ON EST SUR DE
NE PAS REUSSIR EST
CELLE QU'ON NE TENTE PAS
PAUL EMILE VICTOR



Children of the group « *Strong voices* » in Aligny-en-Morvan

Chapter 2

The right to express yourself and be heard

**“ Adult and child:
it’s as if there were
two lives. One that is
taken seriously and
respected and another
that is tolerated with a
little indulgence and is
accorded less interest.
Yet we’re talking about
one and the same
person. ”**

Janusz Korczak

**“ Adults should put
more trust in us
and respect us. ”**

Children from AEDE

The main ideas promoted

16 groups of children worked on this subject

40%

Enabling children to be actors
in realising their rights

20%

Taking what children have to say seriously

15%

Enabling children to be heard during their primary
and secondary schooling

8%

Respecting detained children’s right to be heard

6%

Respecting the right of children
in the care of child protection services to be heard

5%

Respecting the right to equal expression

3%

Taking account of children’s opinions
in order to take the best decisions

1%

Creating forums and mediums for expression
for and by children
Implementing procedures for collecting children’s
voices that are better adapted to their needs and
more respectful



Chapter 2

Proposals

Enabling children to be actors in realising their rights

“You should have the right to vote at 16. The capacity for discernment is not a matter of age but of engagement, and we young people are engaged.”

Children from the Prado Association, Bourgogne

“Make it compulsory to have minors on Municipal Councils to represent children’s interests and educate them in citizenship from the earliest possible age.”

Children from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace

“Facilitate minors’ right to demonstrate; especially so that they can express their right to live on a sustainable planet.”

Children from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace

“How do you set about improving young people’s participation? By creating a compulsory Children’s Council. It would be an assembly of volunteer or elected children who would talk about their daily lives and put forward solutions to improve them. Final decisions would be taken by responsible adults. Taking ‘Social Life Councils’ (CVSs) as a model, a participative body could be set up that would enable children to be heard, in association with various federations (at regional and then national level). Local committees could then be created to communicate proposals at national level.”

Children from Action Jeunesse, Aube

“ How do you get young people’s opinions heard at national level? A young person would have to be assigned to an important position (mayor, for example). To do so, elections could be held in which only minors are allowed to vote. ”

Children from the ANACEJ

“ Hold elections of children’s representatives, like they do at school for class representatives. ”

Children from Cité Bethléem

“ Participatory Assemblies should be organised (meetings bringing together everyone in the town). To do this, the town or organising body would have to arrange transport to collect children who want to participate (and reassure adults). Children’s actions should be given more publicity. We do a lot of things that are not necessarily known about. They could be highlighted in lots of ways (in books, films, commercials, etc.). ”

Children from the ANACEJ

“ I’m 8 years old and I hurt my elbow. I was cared for, but it made me wonder: ‘why did they put paper on my cut?’ I didn’t dare ask the doctor but I was worried. Doctors should always explain things to us in words we can understand. ”

Children from Secours Catholique

“ How do you prepare young people for participation in public life? More moral and civic education (EMC) classes should be taught. A ‘Children’s President’ should be elected; young people should have to spend a year on a Youth Council or participating in citizen-based initiatives; young people should be informed as adults are (during their lower and upper secondary schooling); an information day should be held in town halls and other institutions; finally, there should be awareness-raising on ‘fake news’ and young people should be taught to better decipher media messages. ”

Children from the ANACEJ

Respecting children and considering what they have to say

“Adults should put more trust in us and respect us.”

Children from AEDE

“When you want to say something, you shouldn't feel uneasy, and you should be able to express yourself, it's your right.”

Children from SOS Children's Villages

“Adults should stop mistreating us, hitting us when they don't agree.”

Children from AEDE

“They don't respect my choices even when they ask my opinion.”

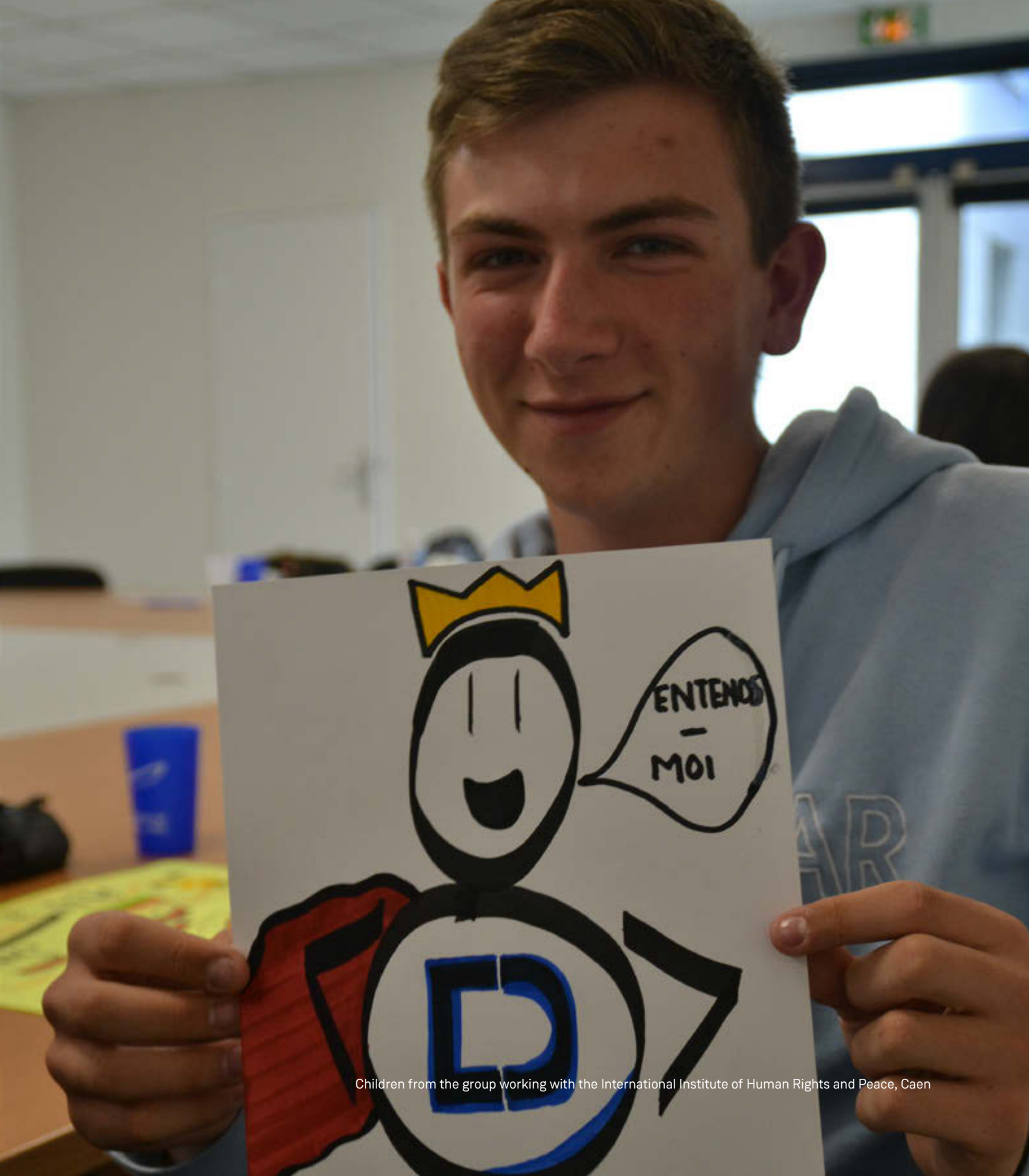
Children from SOS Children's Villages

“I was never really given any choice about what I studied during my upper secondary education.”

Children from SOS Children's Villages

“I can express myself at school even though they don't always listen to me... other young people don't necessarily listen, they sometimes make fun of me. As for the adults, you don't know whether they take account of what we have to say or not. Sometimes they make fun of us too, and the other children copy them. When we do sport, we're afraid to express ourselves because we're afraid of being yelled, as we're not there to talk, just to learn. Yet they keep telling us 'that you must learn to listen to each other'.”

Child from AEDE



Children from the group working with the International Institute of Human Rights and Peace, Caen

Enabling children to be heard during their primary and secondary schooling

“ Young people’s opinions are taken no notice of: we suggest introducing ‘wish lists’ that could be filled out at school and communicated by an intermediary. ”

Children from the ANACEJ

“ Class councils should be properly prepared with the class teacher and class representatives, who should get each pupil to complete a form beforehand (on their strong/weak points, problems and questions). Not including the whole class in them would avoid overcrowding and ensure a climate more conducive to discussion. On the day the council is held, more account should be taken of what class representatives have to say, rather than their being regarded as ‘just secretaries’ . ”

Children from Solidarité Laïque

“ Pupils should be called in to participate on a case-by-case basis when their situations are referred to and are problematic (behaviour, scholastic results, etc.) and when they ask to do so to discuss a particular problem.

Too little is known about Lower Secondary School Councils (CVCs): which pupils are members? How are they chosen? We suggest the following: why not hold a vote at the beginning of the school year to choose pupils’ representatives? They should be made better known and exchanges with other pupils should be organised so that they can really act as relays of their ideas. ”

Children from Solidarité Laïque

“ Of course, class representatives attend class councils, but what are their opinions really worth? Not much. Nobody really listen to them and they’re often briefed beforehand so as to filter any questions they might have. ”

Children from Solidarité Laïque

“ There are representatives, of course, but once they’re elected they only represent themselves. They don’t have enough time to talk with the young people they represent.

Our proposal is that time should be set aside for meetings, which could be in the following form: once a month or term, the children representatives could meet with young people (in schools for example) and swap ideas with them. They could go in pairs, organised with the Principal Educational Advisor (CPE) or EMC teachers. ”

Children from Solidarité Laïque

Respecting detained children's right to be heard

“ We’d like the warders to recognise when we need something and react quickly. Some warders take their time or don’t come at all when we require them.

We’d like to have an interlocutor suited to each one of us so that we could really speak our hearts. A great many young people complain about not being able to confide in someone who is ready to listen carefully to what they have to say individually.

We’d like to be listened to more without having to resort to violence and threats so as to make the warders take real notice of us. In order to be taken seriously, you have to adapt to the warder on duty. Kindness, threats, violence, you can’t express yourself normally as they only react to certain kinds of behaviour.

We’d therefore like to see more supervision in the various institutions we’re sent to, the weight and importance of what children have to say really being taken into account, and adults stop demonising us. We’d like children like us to be more humanised.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’re aware that it’s important to know our rights as it enables us to know what we can do and what we don’t have the right to do. It’s essential to know them as it’s the only way we can defend ourselves. All rights are important, but the one we’re most attached to is the right to express yourself and be heard. Children should be listened to as adults are, we should have the right to a second chance.

The right to express yourself and be heard should be respected more as this could prevent some of us from reoffending or doing what can’t be undone by attempting suicide. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ Today, we really have the impression that our words are worthless in the face of the justice system. We’d really like to militate on behalf of causes like hunger in the world, but there would be no point as we’d just end up being locked up. The same thing would happen if we started complaining about detention conditions or police violence.

We’d rather keep our mouths shut so as to avoid being punished worse than we already are. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

Respecting the right of children in the care of child protection services to be heard

“ In children’s homes, it should be possible to be able to speak directly to the director of the institution every 3 months and set up discussion sessions. So that we can be sure of being heard. If the director can’t do what we ask, he should explain why not and time should be taken to reach a compromise.”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

“ Is it possible for professionals to provide us with better help to prepare for the future? For them to listen to our plans? ”

ODPE Youth Committee

“ We’d like young people’s opinions to be taken more account of before being sent in care. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like to have the right to be listened to like everybody else, for people to stop simply continuing to be prejudiced about us, and for all of them, all of you, to learn to dissociate the act committed from the person who committed it. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like to see our voices listened to as much as adults’ as there are too many injustices and too much abuse of power in institutions. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like to be able to have interviews to explain how we really live from day to day. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like social workers to be readier to listen to us and try and put themselves in our shoes. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ Social workers in children’s homes should know their work and be trained to help us. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

Respecting the right to equal expression

“Provide all children in France with the same consultation mechanisms, no matter where they live (in particular in Mayotte).”

Children from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace

“So that as many children as possible feel that they’re being heard, there should be more diversity, social diversity in particular, within participatory bodies intended for young people. But if it’s to be effective, such diversity among children should be ensured as early as possible. Early childhood therefore seems to have a crucial fundamental role to play, in the same way as education, especially through school medium.”

Children from the ANACEJ

“We must all become proficient in the French language, otherwise we can’t express ourselves... The importance of equality of expression should also be stressed.”

Children from AEDE

“Adults should understand that we’re all equal, that we deserve the same attention, and they should ask our opinion so as not to do something we don’t want to do.”

Children from AEDE

“I’m surely being heard at the moment. But sometimes, as I’m from Africa and as there aren’t many possibilities to get an education over there, people from here in France think that, as I haven’t studied much and don’t know much, I don’t have an opinion.”

Children from the Salvation Army Foundation



Children from the group working with the International Institute of Human Rights and Peace, Caen

Taking account of children's opinions in order to take the best decisions

“What the law says about parental authority should be extended to everyone (teachers, youth workers and facilitators) and it should be made compulsory: take account of children's opinions on matters affecting them. Nobody seems aware of this or how it should work. It's not about letting children decide everything. It's taking their opinions into account when a decision concerning them needs to be taken.”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

“Parents should ask us what activities we want to do.”

Children from AEDE

“Children's opinions often count for nothing in a divorce.

We're not listened to enough by judges or on matters that affect our own lives.

We therefore propose a project on raising the general public's awareness so that all children's opinions are taken more account of, particularly when their parents are getting divorced.

To see that this happens, we'll send letters to the Town Hall, speak at schools and distribute leaflets so that each and every child will be heard and their opinions taken better account of by judges.”

Children from Voix de l'Enfant

“The fact of being heard can help you have a better life.”

Children from the Salvation Army Foundation

“To help children, you've got to know what they want. You've got to understand them too.”

Children from the Prado Association, Bourgogne

“How do you do this?

How do you better incorporate children and young people into ‘adult’ discussions resulting in various decisions being taken that impact them directly? How do you encourage adults to listen to young people and take their opinions into account? We suggest the following: greater open-mindedness on the part of adults so that they accept young people; let young people and the new generations express themselves freely and really take their opinions into account; and that it’s up to young people to assert themselves and not hold back.”

Children from the ANACEJ

Implementing procedures for collecting children's voices that are better adapted to their needs and more respectful

“We tell ourselves that it's pointless to say what we think when we're in front of a judge, that it won't change anything. What we say has no effect. We're never right because we're children. What an adult has to say is more valuable. The judge asks us to look him in the eyes to see if we're telling the truth. He doesn't believe us. He thinks that as something happened before, the same thing must have happened again. He doesn't believe in change. Sometimes you get the impression he believes us and sometimes not, you can see it in his face.”

ODPE Youth Committee

“Sometimes the judge talks as if he were in our shoes. As if he knew better than us what happened.”

ODPE Youth Committee

Creating forums and mediums for expression for and by children

“ You could create ‘Junior Media’ consisting of a TV channel, a website and an app managed by journalists and children. Children could ask questions and journalists give them real answers. Children could do reports on subjects of their choice: no ‘fake news’, all answers are simplified. How do you do this? You need to find volunteer journalists and child editors to publish articles and answer questions. The goal would be to provide real information in a fun way. ”

Children from La Comète

“ Create a radio station at Cité Bethléem, in our association. ”

Children from Cité Bethléem

“ I’d like to be able to choose my school and the sport I like. ”

Children from SOS Children’s Villages



Children of the group « *Strong voices* » in Aligny-en-Morvan

Chapter 3

The right to education and recreation

“Why aren’t we at school? Without education, we’ve got no future.”

Child from Hors la rue

“The content of a book holds the power of education, and it is with this power that we can shape our future and change lives.”

Malala Yousafzai, Winner of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize at the age of 17

The main ideas promoted

12 groups worked on this subject

28%

The right to leisure

17%

The right to leisure for children in detention

15%

Inequalities in access to school

14%

Access to school for children in situations of major precarity

10%

Physical and psychological wellbeing at school

7%

The right to education for children in detention

4%

These days, schools don’t enable pupils to fulfil their dreams or achieve their career goals

3%

Disabled children’s right to education

2%

Continuing your schooling when you’re a mother



Chapter 3

Proposals

The right to leisure

“ You should have the right to play. ”

Children from SAMU Social

“ Out-of-school activities should be made more accessible. ”

Children from UNICEF

“ The main obstacle is that you haven’t got enough money to buy a bike, do a sport or go to the cinema. ”

Children from UNICEF

“ During the holidays, when you don’t know whether you’re going to go away, when you haven’t got the means, you feel different from the others. It isn’t easy at school, sharing with your friends and answering teachers’ questions before and after the holidays. ”

Children from Secours Catholique

“ Access to leisure activities (cinemas, sports clubs, etc.) should be less expensive, even free, for all young people, including girls. The Departemental Council should finance sports licences for those who need them. ”

Children from UNICEF

“ We’d like to invent a new right: the right to have parents who play with their children. Parents just sleep, watch TV, theirphone , cook, tidy up, and go to work. They should learn how to play Monopoly, Connect 4, football, water fights, hide-and-seek, the tickle game, basketball, sports games, how to cycle, roller-skate, anything with wheels. They should be free for their children at weekends, to go to the park or the swimming pool, to watch films with them. They should learn to be silly. ”

Children from SAMU Social

“ Girls should be able to enrol in sports activities and football clubs. More girls’ teams should be created, and mixed teams too. ”

Children from UNICEF

The right to leisure for children in detention

“We’re locked up and we’d like the right to use the exercise yard to be respected. Some warders lie or take their time so that we can’t go outside.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like to have more time in the exercise yard, to have time in the mornings and afternoons, for example. Time in the yard varies from half an hour to an hour and it’s only once a day during the week.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like to have access to a video-games room when we behave well and we’d like not to be deprived of television when we don’t behave well.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like to have a wider choice of sports activities, especially riding and swimming. There are sports sessions on offer, but the main activities are football and bodybuilding. We’d like there to be more variety in the workshops on offer, to have them with animals, for example, and music.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like to have the right to have a snack together, once a week.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like to be able to spend more time with other young prisoners as solitude makes us have even more dark thoughts and bad intentions.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like all children to have access to activities, to recreation, whatever their origins, living environments or age. We’d like to have the right to have fun.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

Inequalities in access to school

“The right to go to school should be accessible to everyone everywhere in France.”

Children from UNICEF France

“The teachers pay more attention to good students than to poor ones. It should be the other way round.”

Children from l'Oiseau-Lyre

“What can be done to make teachers and pupils equal?”

Our proposals are that teachers eat the same things as pupils and in the same place; that lateness and absences are recorded and taken seriously; that the same rules are applied to pupils and teachers; that teachers should queue up in the canteen the same as pupils; that pupils can mark teachers' lessons – on teachers' being overfamiliar for example; that pupils are paid a wage; and that teachers are punished too (lateness, absence, behaviour, etc.).”

Children from the ANACEJ

“You should come here and set up a school.”

Child from Secours Catholique, Mayotte

“A lot of pupils are not respected because they can't speak the language. They don't respect pupils who are ill or disabled either.”

Children from UNICEF France

“Plans to combat racism should be adjusted to the realities we have to cope with every day as unaccompanied minors and children of the traveller community: for those of us who have managed to enrol in a school despite the obstacles in our paths, racism and the bullying that goes with it are major reasons for dropping out and going your own way. Just as our exclusion from school is one of the Republic's blind spots, nothing is done to stop the violence we experience there from other children, their parents as well all too often, and the teaching staff; it only arouses the indifference that accompanies contempt and ignorance.”

Children from the École pour Tous Collective

*“ One day, a teacher said to me,
‘Go back to your country’. ”*

Children from UNICEF France

*“ The right to go to school is not
respected. After moving from a house,
for example, you sometimes have to
wait for several months before you
can enrol. When your new address is
in another town, or if the address is
different from where you actually live.
When the home’s youth worker makes
appointments during school hours. ”*

Children from UNICEF France

Access to school for children in situations of major precarity

“ Access to stable accommodation would enable better scholastic success and so would extra lessons in French when you arrive in France and at school. ”

Children from UNICEF France

“ I’d like to tell you something, there are children who don’t go to school, they don’t understand anything because they should go to school. All children should go to school, from all countries, so that they learn stuff, so that they learn to speak in French, learn maths, read, French and physics and chemistry, and English. ”

Children from Secours Catholique, Mayotte

“Educational mediation should be developed to help children arriving on the territory.”

Children from the École pour Tous Collective

“We should create an information mission focusing on the causes of exclusion from the right to public education for children in situations of major precarity (living on the streets, in shantytowns, squats or emergency accommodation, unaccompanied minors and members of the traveller community). The mission would help overcome the glaring lack of knowledge and reliable public data on the scale of the phenomenon as well as on the mechanisms and failures that are at its origin. Better knowledge of the subject would enable the necessary measures to be thought out and put forward, the most efficient ways to rebuild the broken pathway to our access to schooling.”

Children from the École pour Tous Collective

“The documents required for school enrolment should be simplified and standardised so as to enable children living in shantytowns, squats, and hostels for the homeless to get access to schooling more easily.”

Children from the École pour Tous Collective

“Institute a ‘scholastic truce’: all experimental and institutionalised educational systems are and will continue to be doomed to failure as long as we’re forced to move without wanting to (expulsion from a squat or shantytown, refusal to extend the length of stay in a reception area, relocation of a hostel for the homeless, or end of care by the child welfare services in the middle of the school year).”

Children from the École pour Tous Collective

Physical and psychological wellbeing at school

“To combat lack of respect among pupils, hours set aside for discussion between them should be included in school programmes.”

Children from UNICEF France

“To combat bullying at school, there should be someone specialised, a happiness coach, who looks after children and can be there to help them when it happens. Someone just for them.”

Children from l'Oiseau-Lyre

“There's never a nurse at school. When you hurt yourself, or have questions or a problem, you can't turn to anybody, only the teachers. There should be someone to take care of us, advise us and support us.”

Children from l'Oiseau-Lyre

“There should be more nurses in schools, and they should be better trained, so that they listen more closely to young people when they talk about their health and sexuality, while respecting medical secrecy.”

Children from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace

“There's no more toilet paper at our school and we have to bring our own. It's other people's fault that children steal and damage the toilets, but we shouldn't be punished for it too.”

Children from l'Oiseau-Lyre

“ At school, I’m always being bothered by my classmates, bullied really. I’ve talked a bit about it to the teachers but they don’t understand. They yell at my classmates and so they take it out on me. ”

Children from l’Oiseau-Lyre

The right to education for children in detention

“We’d like to have longer classes better adapted to each of us. 30-minute lessons are too short, their content is too simple and it’s not adapted to everyone’s educational level.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like to have cooking workshops with our mentors (on Saturdays, for example).”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like to have other subjects besides French, mathematics and painting; physics and chemistry lessons for example, or computer science and music.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like there to be proper guidance systems; especially in cases of school dropout, as the moment you don’t toe the line, you’re immediately left to your own devices.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like there to be more alternatives at schools, or at least better guidance to existing alternatives, as we’re not given enough guidance or monitored enough during our schooling.”

Children from Grandir Dignement



Children from the group " *The Voice of Child* " during the Cup of Brotherhood

**These days,
schools
don't
enable
pupils
to fulfil their
dreams
or
achieve their
career goals**

“When you're a foster child, without a family, you can't follow the upper secondary courses you want to as the people in charge of our educational pathways think that you may not get a 'young adult contract', grant or money to attend them. As for me, I wanted to do general studies so as to have a choice and not close any doors, but instead I'm doing bakery, which I don't like. I don't want to but I don't have a choice. To change things, I suggest that a new age group should be officially recognised, between minority and majority, between 18 and 26 years old: young adults. The new age group should be given the same rights as minors, just with more autonomy. Like that, you'd not be abandoned after your 18th birthday and could choose the career you want.”

Child from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

“In order to lower the unemployment rate, school should be made compulsory up to the age of 18 as well as the Certificate of Professional Aptitude, so as to find a job and cut down the unemployment rate.”

Children from the ANACEJ

“Schooling is only taken responsibility for until you’re 18. If you’re not proficient enough in the language you can’t get into a general upper secondary school, you have to do a professional baccalaureate or a Certificate of Professional Aptitude, even if that’s not what you want to do. We’d like to be taken charge of for longer so that we can continue our studies after we’re 18. Pupils who want it should be provided with a year in which to learn (several) languages and French.”

Children from UNICEF France

“It takes time to learn French, and in order to choose your study path you’ve got to do it quickly and have enough time to learn it; we should be given more help to learn French.”

Children from UNICEF France

“You need to learn French right from the start. When you arrive in France, without being able to speak the language, you’re enrolled in a lower secondary school where you spend your time not understanding anything.”

Children from UNICEF France

Disabled children's right to education

“All disabled children should be able to go to school and attend all the classes.”

Children from UNICEF France

“Children should be more involved in the reception of and help given to disabled pupils: assemble the children to present and explain so as to ensure better living together, learning the values of solidarity and tolerance through action, whatever your age.”

Children from UNICEF France

“So that disabled children can go to school, we propose compulsory training for teachers so that they know and understand the different kinds of disability (including dyslexia) so as to know how to act and react, and enable better access to education.”

Children from Solidarité Laïque

“At school, there should be a person who can speak sign language beside each teacher. Or a new machine should be invented.”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

Continuing your schooling when you're a mother

“I’m a young mum, I’m in my final year at school and my baby is very ill. As a result and because I’ve got nobody to help me look after him, I have to miss classes. I’m really worried about him too, and so I don’t really feel I’m being supported by the teachers, who don’t understand. I propose that juvenile mums have a ‘young mothers’ assistant’. Assistants could be retired people who need to stay in touch with others and would like to devote some of their time to children.”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

“School don’t know how to treat juvenile mums. When you’re pregnant, you can’t attend all the classes. But teachers don’t seem to understand. You sometimes have to miss lots of classes or even exams, and you may have to do the year again as a result. It’s not right. You should be able to have computerised lessons you can study on your own, or a teacher at home.”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

“I’m a juvenile mum and I think there should be awareness-raising among young people so that they stop making fun of me at school and leaving me out of things.”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil



Teenagers debates by the COFRADE

Chapter 4

The right to equality

“ Don’t hang around with him, he’s in a home. ”

Child from the La Sauvegarde association

“ All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. ”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1

The main ideas promoted

11 groups worked on this subject

50%

Disabled children’s rights

21%

The right to equality for children in care

19%

The right to equality and non-discrimination

9%

The right to gender equality

1%

Secularism



Chapter 4

Proposals

Disabled children's rights

“Disabled children have the same rights as the others.”

Child from SOS Children's Villages

“The able-bodied and the disabled should be mixed together in schools.”

Child from the ANACEJ

“When a child can't go to school, a teacher should go to their home to teach them.”

Child from Cités du Secours Catholique

“There should be more awareness-raising in schools.”

Child from the ANACEJ

“Parasports should be included in the school programme.”

Child from the ANACEJ

“Enable disabled children to benefit from appropriate support so as to be included in the school system.”

Children from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace

“The disabled should have the right to go to school like everyone else and have a career.”

Child from CLAVIM

“We'd like to see disabled children being able to live with the others and have real access to education and recreation and be able to move about freely... We think there's a desperate lack of accommodations for them, whether they suffer from a physical or mental disability.”

Children from Grandir dignement

“ 40 out of 70 metro stations don’t have lifts. As for pushchairs and wheelchairs, it’s just not possible. This must change. ”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

“ All buildings should have lifts. ”

Child from Cités du Secours Catholique

“ Disabled people should be able to have ground-floor accommodation so they can get about more easily. ”

Child from Cités du Secours Catholique

“ A priority should be made of bringing buildings up to standards for the disabled and enabling easier movement on streets (removing cobbles, widening pavements, putting up more illuminated signs for the sight-impaired, and facilitating access to the metro). ”

Child from the ANACEJ

“ All the children in the world who need them should be provided with glasses. ”

Child from Cités du Secours Catholique

“ We should all help blind people to cross the road. ”

Child from CLAVIM

“ Prosthetics should be less expensive or better reimbursed by the social security. ”

Child from the ANACEJ

“ Provide more local treatment (mini-hospitals in towns). ”

Child from the ANACEJ

“ Disabled children’s rights are not talked about nearly enough compared with other rights. How do you make them known and develop them? Lots of children are bullied and do you know how many disabled children are made fun of? A great many, too many. Disabled children should be able to live like ordinary children and be equal with us. When I use the word ‘disabled’ you picture someone in a wheelchair, but it’s not just them. There are those who have lost one of their senses (sight, hearing, the ability to speak, etc.). So, if the way they live needs improving, it might be a good start to show that they exist and that they’re not excluded from society. Disabled people don’t have adequate access to means of transport. Perhaps we should start with that. ”

Children from the De Vives Voix troop

“ I’ve got a disabled brother and sister, they’re deaf. Often, when people see her, you don’t say straight out that she’s deaf. When she goofs up, I apologise for her and people take it very badly. As for my brother, when people see him, they take him for a retard. We can also count how many children are made fun of at school, causing anger, stress and even loneliness. Finally, disabled children’s rights are not properly respected; children should be respected and helped more. We should show that they’re on the same pedestal as us. They’re no different and we’re equal, so help them adapt to this society. Thank you. ”

Children from the De Vives Voix troop



The show on the rights of the child « *My Treasure* », La Comète of Hésingue

The right to equality for children in the care of child protection services

“ Talks should be given to classes to make pupils understand how lucky they are to live with their parents. People should also be invited to schools to explain what it’s like to be placed in care. So that people understand. Young people should be invited. It would also be a good idea if some of them were people who had been in care. It should be explained that we’re not problem children (or young people). ”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“ Put people into foster families to live without their parents for a month in another family or in a home, and perhaps they’ll understand how we feel. ”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“ Ignore everything, make your own way and let other people say what they like. Because if you accept it, you will not care how other people see you. ”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“ A lot of us spent time with foster families before being sent in care. People equate children in homes with delinquents. But we didn’t choose to be in a home. That’s just how it is. ”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“ Parents often say to their children, ‘Don’t hang around with him. He’s in a home’. I know it’s true because my friends have told me that their parents have said it to them. Even without knowing me. I didn’t like being differentiated from the others. ”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“ On the contrary, our friends sometimes say, ‘You’re lucky, you get €100 a week with your youth workers! ”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“Foster families behave differently towards a fostered child and their own children.”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“Often, when something goes wrong in the foster family, they listen to the foster carer, not us.”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“I was wrongly accused all the time. There was a construction site next to the foster family’s house. They accused me of stealing and breaking equipment. It wasn’t me. I was blamed all the time because I’m with a foster family or in a home.”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“Youth workers have made discriminating comment about me!”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“At school, the other pupils ask us questions:

‘Why are you in a home?’ ‘Have you got parents?’, ‘Are your parents dead?’ Our situations make them wonder but they don’t realise that it’s our life and it’s already not easy, so we don’t feel like talking about it. I only talk to my best friends, as for the others, it’s none of their business.”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“People have told me that it serves me right that I’m an orphan.”

Children from La Sauvegarde

“Teachers sometimes ‘take pity on us’, asking us ‘What’s it like in the home’ and telling us it doesn’t matter when we don’t do some of the work we’ve been given, when others are punished for the same thing.”

Children from La Sauvegarde

The right to equality and non-discrimination

“ There need to be forums where victims of discrimination can express themselves and confide in others so as not to be alone and get help. ”

Children from the ANACEJ

“ Better moderate content on social networks (shocking videos often left up for too long before being deleted, hate speech sometimes left unreported, etc.). ”

Children from the ANACEJ

“ Set up ‘training programmes’ to learn how to use social networks, focusing on protection of privacy in particular. And younger people need to be made aware of the question of privacy in the context of a hyper-connected society. ”

Children from the ANACEJ

“ Ensure greater diversity (able-bodied/ disabled as well as gender) in major institutions and the media, which are closely watched by younger generations and the promoters of various ‘values’ (‘more parity in institutions’, ‘increase women’s pay’, ‘facilitate women’s access to jobs’, ‘same coverage of women’s sports in the media’, etc.). ”

Children from the ANACEJ

“ Set up forums for development of critical thinking and work on knowing yourself from the youngest possible age: ‘What values do I want to promote?’, ‘What seems normal to me and what doesn’t?’ ”

Children from l’ANACEJ

“ I’ve been discriminated against because I’m a lesbian. I think it’s unjust as everyone has the right to their place. Of course it’s by heterosexuals. ”

Child from La Sauvegarde

“ Public transport in isolated villages should be improved so as to ensure equality of access to education and leisure activities. ”

Children from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace

“ All children should have a school near where they live. ”

Child from Cités du Secours Catholique

“ I was walking down the street when some police officers came up to me. They started to insult my origins and treat me as a ‘dirty Arab’. I didn’t say anything so as not to have any problems. Then they pushed me into a little side-street and started to hit me. Then they took me to the police station, where I stayed for 48 hours without the right to ask for a lawyer or a doctor. I’m 14 years old and I’m an unaccompanied minor in care. I’ve never caused any problems, as my teachers can tell you. ”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

The right to gender equality

“They enrolled me in handball lessons without asking my opinion. Is that normal in the first place? When I went, there was only a girls’ team. There was a boy with us, nobody knew why he was there but we told ourselves it could be cool. The sports teacher went up to him and told him, ‘You’ve got the wrong day, boys train tomorrow. Come tomorrow because the boys’ level is higher than the girls’, it’ll suit you better.”

Children from Oiseau-Lyre

“I’m in a girls’ football team. My club has a boys’ team and a girls’ team. A few months ago, the girls’ team protested because the boys had the right to train every day and we could only train on Wednesdays. Our protests didn’t change much, as we only gained one extra day for training. Two days isn’t enough. In addition, the boys do a lot of work on their physiques and strength while we don’t. Result: when we play against them; we’re not as strong as them although it’s just because we’re not able to train as much.”

Children from Oiseau-Lyre

Secularism

“If secularism means not showing your religion, keeping it to yourself, why not have neutral public holidays? A public holiday for Children’s Rights Day, for example. Why are there only public holidays for the Christian religion? Especially when there are fewer and fewer Christians in France? When we want to celebrate Aïd el-Seghir, we have to go to school or work anyway.”

Children from Oiseau-Lyre



Perron Central

Young people from the group "School for All"

Chapter 5

**The right
to the best
possible
state
of health
and
the best life
possible**

**“ Everyone should
have the right
to sleep and eat. ”**

Children from SAMU Social

**“ Despite high
expenditures,
France’s results
with regard to
children’s wellbeing
and health
are unequal. ”**

Report by the Inspectorate General of Social
Affairs, “Social inequalities of health in
childhood”, 2011

The main ideas promoted

8 groups worked on this subject

40%

Access to treatment for children in care

30%

Respect of the rights to survival
and development

10%

Better awareness-raising among children and
medical monitoring adapted to their needs

10%

The right to dignified accommodation

10%

Improving living conditions
for children in detention



Chapter 5

Proposals

Access to treatment for children under protection

“We can make a long list of failures: unsuitable food being served repeatedly in homes; refusal of treatment if our injuries are our fault; youth workers refusing to help children when they’re in hospital; staff in homes not trained to give medicines at night; no vaccination after 9 months in a home; long overdue appointments with doctors, which are usually postponed, sometimes for as much as two months.”

Children from UNICEF France

“It’s difficult to get treatment when you can’t speak the language. You have to go with a friend as there are no translator.”

Children from UNICEF France

“They refuse to give medicines to people without papers, even when they’re ill and go to hospital.”

Children from UNICEF France

“Getting treatment is expensive when you don’t have papers.”

Children from UNICEF France

“You should be vaccinated when you first arrive in France.”

Children from UNICEF France

“You should be given help with admittance to hospital and there should be simpler procedures for obtaining authorisations from the Départemental Councils, questions and papers.”

Children from UNICEF France

“Don’t wait until children obtain Universal Health Coverage (CMU) to provide them with the necessary treatment free of charge.”

Children from UNICEF France

“Get sent to another doctor if your usual doctor has no time. Get treated as quickly as possible.”

Children from UNICEF France

“Have a specialised doctor in all lower secondary schools, to treat children who have just arrived in France.”

Children from UNICEF France

“Facilitate access to free medicines.”

Children from UNICEF France

“Go to a psychologist if necessary.”

Children from UNICEF France

“Facilitate access to medical records (Healthcare Cards) between European countries.”

Children from UNICEF France

Respect of the rights to survival and development

“I’d like to have the right to sleep properly all night. If I can’t sleep, my brain can’t learn.”

Child from Hors la Rue

“Everyone should have the right to sleep and eat.”

Children from SAMU Social

“We should all have healthcare cards: we’re not all equal when it comes to healthcare.”

Children from the ACODEGE

“There are between 20,000 and 30,000 homeless children in France. Which means that they don’t have access to basic medical care most of the time. Doctors should be made to set aside time to go around all the towns and give free consultations. It’s a fundamental right, the most important right: the right to stay alive.”

Children from Oiseau-Lyre

“To facilitate access to healthcare – simplify procedures and speed up responses, access to medical records and free treatment – all children should be provided with assistance and a specialised doctor in each lower secondary school to treat foreign children.”

Children from UNICEF France

“I think that poor people should be given money, and illnesses and how to treat them should be explained.”

Child from the Salvation Army

Better awareness- raising among children and medical monitoring adapted to their needs

“Be given more consideration by doctors: for doctors, we’re not patients any more, we’re customers. When you go to one, they start by asking for my healthcare card and then they listen to me and examine me.”

Children from the ACODEGE

“There should be more adults around, adults should take care of children properly.”

Children from the Salvation Army

“It would be good if we had ideas about rules on food, on consumption. I don’t pay enough attention. I’m young and my body’s going to change.”

Children from the ACODEGE

The right to dignified accommodation

“We’d like rich people, prosecutors, the social services and other people to try sleeping in the street for a day, so that they really take account of how we live when we reach adulthood.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“When you’re living on the street and go to school, summers are complicated: there’s no more canteen and most of the associations are on holiday. My dad is worried that he won’t be able to feed us properly this summer.”

Children from Secours Catholique

“There should be more schools, and when you see a poor child on his/her own, you should go and find his/her parents.”

Children from Secours Catholique, Mayotte

“There should be somebody responsible for going around hostels for the homeless to make sure that people there are living in good conditions.”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

“We unaccompanied minors often sleep in hotels alone. Sometimes we’re in squats, for 9 months sometimes, or on the streets, abandoned. You don’t go to school. A family sleeps in their car. There are lots of vacant places to live in my town but a lot of families with children live on the street. They should be allowed to use the vacant accommodation.”

Children d’UNICEF France

“Don’t let minors sleep in hotels alone. It’s too dangerous.”

Children d’UNICEF France

“Improve accommodation for minors. Get admitted to a home, don’t live in a hotel.”

Children d’UNICEF France

“Being helped in the canteen (2 trays instead of one) isn’t enough to satisfy the hunger of a poor child who doesn’t eat properly (or eats practically nothing) at home. I see it as a sort of violence done to a child (who should have a balanced diet) deprived of something important to health. So something should be done, because the child isn’t helped all through the school year as he doesn’t go to school during the school holidays, which means no canteen. So the child doesn’t benefit any more from this support, which helps him eat better but not enough for a proper diet over the long term. So the young person and his parents should be consulted in order to find a way of arranging things regarding the child’s health. As, because he can’t eat properly at home; this has repercussions on his work, as not eating properly can result in loss of concentration, fatigue and weakening of the immune system, as he may lack various vitamins because he doesn’t

eat well. This was my case for three years. I knew what it was like to eat no more than one meal a day, if that, as I ate almost nothing at home because my father didn’t have the means to feed us properly (3 meals a day). The only time I ate properly was at school when my friends paid for me to eat. Even though I was being monitored by the child welfare service and my father had financial support based on the number of children he has. It wasn’t enough to feed us properly (my brothers and sisters and me). So the child welfare service suggested making checks and monitoring my father to make sure that he managed the money properly, only it didn’t happen and so my diet didn’t improve. I had to leave home and get put in care so I could eat till I was full.”

Children from the “De Vives Voix” troop

Improving living conditions for children in detention

“We’d like to live in new cells so as to live in reasonable conditions and have bigger cells as these ones are stifling. We’re dying a slow death in our cells.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“We’d like to have fans provided in our cells free of charge when the weather is very hot. Even during heat waves, we have to buy fans ourselves, and sometimes there aren’t enough.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like important products, such as water, certain kinds of food and hygiene products, to be provided free. If we want to eat something other than what is served in the Minors’ Wing’s, we have to buy everything. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like a better delivery system to be set up so we don’t have to wait at least a week to get what we’ve bought. Imprisoned minors have to order what they want to buy (toothpaste, soap, shampoo, pasta, etc.) and it isn’t delivered the same day. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like equipment and infrastructures to be renovated, the exercise yard repaired, for example, so we don’t get wet when it rains during our walks, and we get some shade when it’s too hot. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like our medical care was more supervised and to be able to consult a specialist in preventive medicine at school, as at present we only have the right every two years. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement



The show on the rights of the child « *My Treasure* », La Comète of Hésingue

Chapter 6

The right to live as a family

“ States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may be necessary in a particular case, such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child’s place of residence. ”

Article 9 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child

“ ... Decisions are not fair enough: I have the impression that the family and the state do not offer enough choice and have not looked enough if in the family, an aunt, a grandmother, could participate in this role to accompany and care for the child. ”

Children from the Salvation Army Foundation

The main ideas promoted

9 groups worked on this subject

80%

Maintaining family ties with parents, sisters and brothers and respecting the best interests of the child

10%

Respecting the privacy of children under protection

10%

Assisting children in the care of the child protection services when they reach adulthood

A young man with dark, curly hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a nose ring, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a dark t-shirt. The image has a red overlay, and the text 'Chapter 6' is written in white on a red rectangular background.

Chapter 6

Proposals

Maintaining family ties with parents, sisters and brothers and respecting the child's best interests

“The best interests of the child should give us the opportunity to participate in the decisions that concern us by giving us real choices.

Decisions are not fair enough: I have the impression that the family and the state do not offer enough choice and have not looked enough if in the family, an aunt, a grandmother, could participate in this role to accompany and care for the child.”

Children from the Salvation Army Foundation

“Enable children to maintain ties with their brothers and sisters, whatever their family situation.”

Children from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace

“Unaccompanied minors in foster homes should be allowed to go and see their families in their countries every 2 years on a provisional passport and guarantee their return. It's important for children to maintain ties with their families.”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

“Families are sometimes separated. An unaccompanied foreign minor who has lived in France for a long time should not be sent back to his country of origin.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“It would be good to allow family reunification based on children.”

Children from La Croix-Rouge, Argenteuil

“ There should be ways of getting more news about your parents when you don’t live with them: by post or telephone. ”

Children from the Salvation Army Foundation

“ Set up family reconciliation centres. The goal would be to strengthen/ reconcile ties after a period in a foster home, provide support and re-establish parent/child bonds, strengthen parent/child ties in order to create memories (carry out activities together). Such centres would be connected to child protection associations; there would be a specialised person present called a ‘remediator’ (which means a person who provides a remedy), who would live with families on a daily basis. Lengths of stays in the centre would be set depending on the situation, needs, and the opinions of youth workers and children’s judges. ”

Children from Action Jeunesse, Aube

“ Nothing can replace a family; as nothing can replace their affection; homes can’t give you that. The ideal is to live and grow as a family. ”

Children from the Salvation Army Foundation

“ When I was small, I was placed with a foster family, but I don’t remember anything about it. Just that when I was 8, I learned that my parents weren’t my ‘real’ parents. So they told me that I was going to see my real parents. It was a shock. And then they told me that I had an hour to spend with them in a room. ”

Child from the Grancher Foundation

“ The family? It doesn’t mean much to me, or rather it’s nothing to me any more now. Other people look after me. My mother did nothing for me; it’s Didier, my youth worker at the home, who does things for me. ”

Children from the Salvation Army Foundation

“ I hate it that my mother still has parental authority when I haven’t seen her for years. ”

Children from SOS Children’s Village

“ It’s stressful when you wonder whether your mother’s going to come or not. ”

Children from SOS Children’s Village

“ My mother never came to see me; she kept parental authority for 6 years. ”

Children from SOS Children’s Village

“ Not knowing whether you’re going to see your parents and always waiting, it can get difficult growing up, it slows down your growth. ”

Children from SOS Children’s Village

“ It makes it very difficult when you need an authorisation for school. Authorisation when you want to go and sleep at a friend’s house, it’s a real horror! ”

Children from SOS Children’s Village

“When older children are placed with a foster family, systematic thought should be given to placing the younger siblings there too. That would avoid ‘sacrificed baby’ situations.”

Children from SOS Children’s Village

“Family ties have been severed, what can be done to prevent this happening? Don’t leave parent/child relationships to one side. Involve yourself somehow in the missions entrusted to all organisations so that they ensure that ties are maintained when that’s what’s wanted. For example, put ‘We guarantee to keep up a parent/child relationship’ in the welcome booklet. Take the trouble to organise it, even with foster families.”

Children from Action Jeunesse, Aube

“We’d like there to be more foster family placements as a child should be with a family, and for ‘surprise’ checks to be carried out in homes and for foster families to show how things really are.”

Children from Grandir dignement

Respecting the privacy of children under protection

“ We’d like the right to privacy to be respected in homes, because it isn’t. Our rooms are opened without knocking and it’s the same with the bathroom. We don’t have any privacy. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

Assisting children in care when they reach adulthood

“We’d like that Child Welfare (ASE), system to change as we’re turned loose on our 18th birthday with no financial resources, no accommodation and no family, and we have to cope with the violence of living on the streets. We think that it’s not normal to abandon us at this particular time, as it’s exactly when we reach adulthood that we need help most.”

Children from Grandir dignement

“Make young adult contracts compulsory for minors in the care of the child protection services, so that the efforts made by the Republic and young people themselves to construct their futures through schooling don’t come to nothing the moment they reach adulthood.”

Children from the École pour Tous collective



Young people from the group "School for All"

Chapter 7

The right to justice adapted to your age

“ We’d like to have more group activities as being alone 22 out of 24 hours brings out the worst in us, breeding even darker thoughts than before. Apart from times in the exercise yard and activities, we stay locked up in our 9-m² cells and spend most of the time watching television ”

Children from Grandir dignement

“ He who opens a school door closes a prison. ”

Victor Hugo

The main ideas promoted

4 groups worked on this subject

80%

Children in prison

10%

Children before the courts

5%

Children whose mothers are in prison

5%

Are children responsible for their actions?



Chapter 7

Proposals

Children in prison

“ We’d like alternative measures to be prioritised, such as community work for example; instead of sending us to a Minors’ Wing, Juvenile Detention Centre or Reinforced Educational Centre. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like young people and adults to be made more aware of detention conditions so that they understand that imprisonment isn’t a solution for minors. Perhaps we could organise visits to Minors’ Wings for judges and lawyers so that they can meet us. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like not to be sent to prison for offences when we’re minors, only for repeat offenders, murder, terrorism or sexual violence. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like punishments to be proportional to the acts committed. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like to have a right to leave the prison for 24 hours under surveillance, in order to go and see our families, especially if they live a long way from the Minors’ Wing and can’t often come on visits. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like to have longer visiting times, it would be a good thing to adapt visiting times to the distances that families have to travel to come and visit us. It doesn’t matter how far a family is from the place their child is imprisoned, lengths of visits are always the same, between 45 minutes for some minors’ wings and a maximum of 1½ hours for others. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like to have the right to have unaccompanied minors visit us, our girlfriends in particular. No minors are allowed in visiting-rooms unless they’ve got an adult with them. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like to have individual showers in cells so that we can take showers whatever time we like. In some minors’ wings, showers are collective and must be taken at specific times. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like there to be places for minors in more big towns so that it would be easier for our parents and friends to come on visits (in Nancy, for example). ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like the Child Welfare Service to carry out more counter-enquiries so that decisions taken by courts aren’t based on just one investigation. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like to be able to celebrate our birthdays. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“If someone hits someone else, for example, or causes them harm; if he commits a crime against somebody. Rather than going to prison or paying a fine, he should give the money directly to the person and make good his mistake with them. Prison doesn’t stop you from making mistakes.”

Children from Oiseau-Lyre

“The right to be tried as a child: you shouldn’t be killed when you’ve done something stupid, a crime. There are countries where the death penalty exists.”

Children from the Salvation Army Foundation

Children before the courts

“It’s too difficult to speak in front of judges and we don’t trust them. We don’t trust them because we’re used to seeing judges when we do ‘bad things’. The judge only talks about what we’ve done wrong, for us or our families. They should talk more about what’s going well. If he summons us, it’s because we’re in the wrong. In general, when you see him it’s not to be congratulated. He never says to us, ‘Bravo, you’ve succeeded!’ He makes us lose hope. He does all he can to make us unhappy, angry. You don’t dare speak.”

ODPE Youth Committee

“You don’t trust judges because they’re the ones who decide. Knowing that your future lies in the hands of someone you don’t know – that’s hard to accept. You’re afraid of saying anything because you depend on him and his decisions. You’ve always got to show as a family that there’ll be no more problems. We all give our opinions: children, parents, the youth worker, but in the end it’s the judge who decides all by himself. You can’t trust judges, it’s impossible.”

ODPE Youth Committee

Children whose mothers are in prison

“Children are born in prison. They should be allowed to grow up with their mums inside the prison. The children would be able to leave and go to school but not their mums. Then when they’re 16, when they don’t need their mums so much, you could ask them what they preferred. Living in prison is hard so this should be given fresh thought, but it’s not because you want to punish the mum that you can punish her child too.”

Children from l’Oiseau-Lyre

Are children responsible for their actions?

“I don’t understand why they consider that we’re responsible enough for our actions to go to prison at the age of 13. And why they don’t consider us responsible enough to vote and be citizens like the others. Shouldn’t we set the same age for everything?”

Children from l’Oiseau-Lyre



Children from the group working with the International Institute of Human Rights and Peace, Caen

Chapter 8

The right to be protected against all forms of violence

**“ Using spanking
and slapping as
“punishment methods”
should be prohibited ”**

Children from SOS Children’s Villages

**“ The French State
should expressly
prohibit corporal
punishment in all
settings, including in
the family, at school,
in daycare facilities,
and in the context of
alternative care. ”**

Recommendations for 2016 by the UN Committee
on the Rights of the Child

The main ideas promoted

8 groups worked on this subject

70%

Making the right to protection against
all forms of violence effective

20%

Better protecting children in care from violence

5%

Better protecting children in detention
from violence

3%

Better awareness-raising and
training in order to avoid violence

2%

Protecting children in wartime



Chapter 8

Proposals

Making the right to protection against all forms of violence effective

“No more spanking!”

Children from Banon Primary School

“There should be penalties when adults don’t respect professional secrecy or the best interests of the child.”

Children from SOS Children’s Villages

“We’d like this right to protection to be real, but it isn’t. For example, if we’re beaten by our family, we’re sent to a home where we’ll be beaten too; then we go to school where other children bully us because we’re in care. It’s an endless cycle of violence.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“The right to protection against exploitation isn’t respected enough. It should be highlighted.”

Children from the Salvation Army Foundation

“We’d like real work to be done on the problem of bullying as it’s a form of violence we’re not protected against.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“How do you measure degrees of abuse, which may be perceived differently from one person to another? An abuse self-assessment tool should be invented so that children can express themselves. Several levels depending on age. For the youngest, in the form of sun/cloud-type drawings, for example. For older kids, a song or a comic strip with well-known characters.”

Children from Action Jeunesse, Aube

“All children have the right to be protected against violence. Not to be hit, bullied, abused or trafficked. Children must be protected because they’re the future of society. And when you’re protected, you’re at peace and relieved. You can get up in the morning without wondering if something is going to happen to you again. Just like adults, children have the right to respect of their dignity and their physical and psychological integrity. But there are still vulnerable people today who need help, disabled and abandoned children in particular. How can you change all this? Through equality and justice. Nobody deserves to be mistreated. All living beings deserve justice, men, women, adults, children and animals. And speaking of adults and children, we should first of all understand that today’s child is tomorrow’s adult. Most children who have suffered violence are monitored by psychologists. What do you have to do to make sure these children grow up to be normal people?”

Child from the De Vives Voix troop

Better protecting children in care from violence

“We’d like exploitation of children to be taken into account and prevented. For example; the foster families we’re sent to should be checked in order to avoid situations where we’re forced to work for them and get hit if we refuse.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“I think that separating brothers and sisters in SOS Children’s Villages’ bungalows can cause psychological violence among children as they’re separated when they’d like to be together in the same house.”

Children from SOS Children’s Villages

“We’d like monitoring visits in our foster families to last for several days as they know very well how to manipulate us and the social workers during short visits organised by the Child Welfare services.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

Better protecting children in detention against violence

“ We’d like new warders, perhaps bringing in younger people so that there would be an end to violence on their part, far away from the cameras, against us, the young prisoners. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ We’d like there to be more inspections carried out in prisons, for the outside world to really check what goes on behind prison walls. There could be ‘surprise’ visits to penal institutions so that the realities are exposed for all to see. Visits are always planned in advance so that the whole prison team knows about them. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

Better awareness- raising and training in order to avoid violence

“ There should be more visits to the police station to meet police officers, or they could come to the school more often and speak to us about violence. ”

Children from Secours Catholique

“ Have classes on parenting at lower secondary school so as to learn how to be a parent and the right attitude and avoid mistreatment. ”

Children from Action Jeunesse, Aube

“ Leave children be. They shouldn't substitute for their families, for other people. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“ There's too much bullying, physical and verbal violence. Workshops on bullying should be organised and a forum created in schools for victims and perpetrators, as quickly as possible and over the long term. ”

Children from La Voix de l'Enfant

Protecting children in wartime

“Guarantee children’s rights to French children of jihadists as they’re not responsible for the situations they’re in.”

Children from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace

“The right to be protected in wartime is an obligation. Children don’t make war, I saw that at school in history, not before they’re 18.”

Children from the Salvation Army Foundation



Children from the group "The Voice of Child" during the Cup of Brotherhood

Chapter 9

**Children's
rights
and
digital
technologies**

“ What I’ve often observed, and as we’ve noted today, is that the people who are supposed to ensure prevention, whether it’s the State or above all our teachers and parents, are not informed enough or simply tell themselves it’s not their generation. So wouldn’t it be possible to have mixed groups of children and adults to give thought to the problem, as we’re doing today? ”

**Teen Debates, COFRADE:
Children from the Dammartin-en-Goële Scouts**

“ At a time when children and teenagers are increasingly connected, parents play a key role in raising their awareness on safe use of the Internet. ”

CNIL, Awareness-raising website

The main ideas promoted

8 groups worked on this subject

60%

Better combating cyberbullying
and violence on the Internet

40%

Better awareness-raising among parents and
children on good uses of the Internet



Chapter 9

Proposals

Better combating cyberbullying and violence on the Internet

“Going back to telephoning, I think that when you’re being bullied, you don’t necessarily know what to expect when you call 08 200 000, there could be major consequences, you might tell yourself that your parents will be in the know when you don’t really want them to find out. And then when you’re being bullied you don’t necessarily feel good about yourself, and tell yourself that perhaps calling isn’t the best solution.”

Children from Aubance lower secondary school
Teen Debates, COFRADE

“We’re not made aware enough of cyberbullying. Because it’s true that, at school, we’ve all had an hour or so on the dangers of the Internet, etc., but first of all it’s very general and a bit behind the times you could say, as the Internet evolves so quickly that an hour’s talk in your first year won’t be the same today as it was 3 years ago. I’m in my final year now, and when you get these talks on bullying, they warn us that we could be bullied on the Internet and that we should speak out about it, but first of all they don’t necessarily tell young people themselves not to bully other youngsters, and then it’s really hard to talk about it when you’re bullied.”

Children from CLAVIM
Teen Debates, COFRADE

“I think that viruses, scams and pirating aren’t punished enough, they’re regarded so lightly that nobody pays much attention and people go on pirating others and don’t care what harm they cause along the way.”

Children from the Lien Horizon Danse association
Teen Debates, COFRADE

“Internet violence, how do you put a stop to it? 4G should be removed from children’s phones and parents should check what they watch. To do so, you could install a surveillance application and put more parental protection on computers and phones. TV sex channels and activities like Mixed Martial Arts should be banned.”

Children from Apprentis d’Auteuil
SAJE Janusz Korczak

“Institute stricter monitoring of publications to combat online hate.”

Children from the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace

“You could invent some Captain Haddock software to leave remarks on social networks, rather than insults and things that use words, it would be less violent, with little animated images, for example, like Captain Haddock speech bubbles when he’s getting angry or insulting someone. You’d just see symbols, and so it’s much less violent than words, which can have a lasting effect.”

Child from the IME, Champhol
Teen Debates, COFRADE

Better awareness- raising among parents and children on good uses of the Internet

“The problem with the Internet is that it evolves as time passes and it would be a good thing if the State somehow managed to keep up with its evolution.

As an example, there are ads on social networks like Facebook and Twitter, so why not use them to promote prevention, a bit like subliminal messages, at secondary schools.

Another example: on YouTube, there are millions of people who follow YouTubers like Squeezie so why not ask them to make videos about it and provide real communication on what's important, whether it's bullying, scams or even on the following question: what do you do when it happens to you? ”

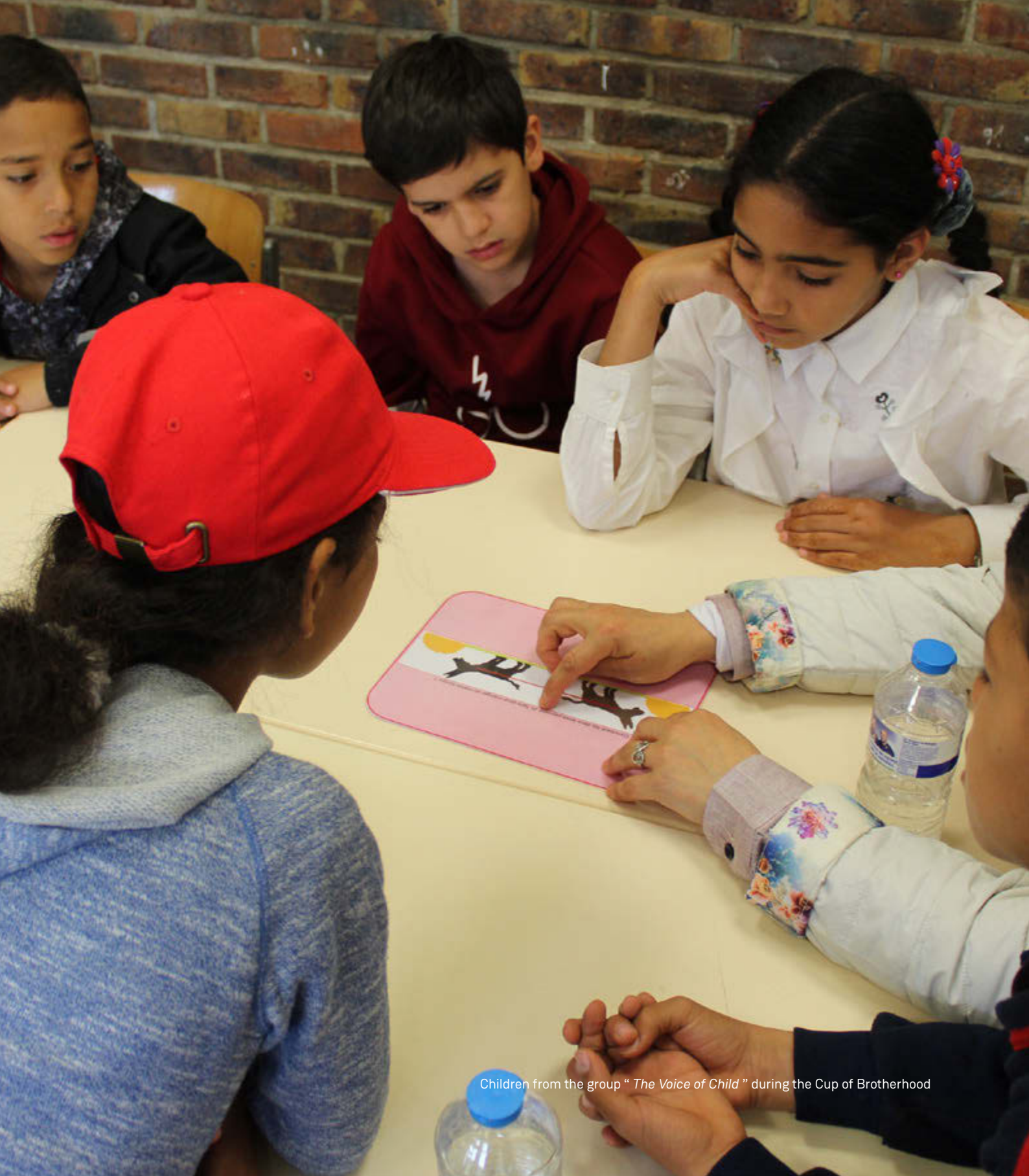
Children from the Saint Nicolas Technical Lycée
Teen Debates, COFRADE

“ We’ve worked on critical thinking and we’ve got a proposal for a law to pass which is to add a module on critical education on the digital world to school programmes for children and young people. In these modules children would learn to use the web properly, be informed of the dangers, made aware of protection on the web and how to act if there’s a problem, learn to construct and develop their critical spirit, and decipher the media (module contents adapted to pupils’ ages). It wouldn’t necessarily be compulsory for parents: provision of information and training modules in order to give adults the means to better monitor the way their children use the Internet and social networks. ”

Children from the Lien Horizon Danse association
Teen Debates, COFRADE

“ Me and my group had the idea of inviting families to school to see how we used the Internet, and also do prevention for parents. ”

Child from the IME, Champhol
Teen Debates, COFRADE



Children from the group " *The Voice of Child* " during the Cup of Brotherhood

Chapter 10

**The
rights
of
unaccompanied
minors**

“ Apply presumption of minority: for those of us who are unaccompanied foreign minors, we ask for institutionalisation of ‘presumption of minority’ as well as the emergency provision of care that results from it, up until recognition or otherwise (by the competent services) of our minority. ”

Child from the École pour Tous Collective

“ Generally speaking, every young person asking to be taken into care and claiming to be a minor and unaccompanied should automatically be admitted to the shelter system by the services mandated to this effect in each département. ”

Recommendations by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2016



Chapter 10

Proposals

Applying presumption of minority

“If the French authorities don’t believe us when we say that we’re minors with our papers, they should contact the authorities in our countries of origin so as to get proof, confirmation of what the children claim.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“Recognition of the status of minor should be facilitated. It’s too difficult, long and painful.”

Children from Grandir Dignement

“I ask you to help all minors so that they have better lives. All unaccompanied minors should be sheltered from danger while they’re going through the necessary procedures.”

Children from Hors la Rue

“If I could give myself rights, I’d see to it that expert assessments of my ages were carried out more quickly.”

Children from Hors la Rue

“Apply presumption of minority: for those of us who are unaccompanied foreign minors, we ask for institutionalisation of ‘presumption of minority’ as well as the emergency provision of care that results from it, up until recognition or otherwise (by the competent services) of our minority.”

Children from the Ecole pour Tous Collective

Simplifying procedure for obtaining French nationality for minors

“ We’d like obtainment of French nationality to be easier to acquire, especially for minors. ”

Children from Grandir Dignement

Acknowledge- ments

Acknowledgments

So that the National Consultation could include all children and be fully adapted to their realities, and so that their voices could be heard at local level, the Defender of Rights drew on the field expertise of almost 50 associations working on behalf of children's rights on a daily basis.

We should like to thank all the associations and all the facilitators and youth workers who enabled the children to express themselves and work on drafting their proposals.

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Associa- tions

- AEDE
- *Apprentis d'Auteuil*: SAJE, Paris; MECS, Le Mans, Pier Giorgio School
- ANACEJ (*Association Nationale Conseils Enfants et Jeunes / National Association of Children's and Youth Councils*): Dunkirk, Nantes, Palaiseau, Schiltigheim, Le Lamentin (Martinique), Carquefou, Strasbourg, Nancy, Aude, Grau du Roi, Issy-les-Moulineaux, Ermont, Gravelines and Allier
- CNAPE: The Jean Gailhac Association; Action Jeunesse, Aube; ADSEA 29; *La Sauvegarde*; ACODEGE
- COFRADE: CLAVIM, Débats d'Adolescents
- *La Croix-Rouge* (Red Cross): *Croix-Rouge*, Nevers; *Croix-Rouge*, Argenteuil; and *Croix-Rouge*, Alençon
- DCI (Defence for Children International) France: Grancher Foundation; *Oiseau-Lyre* Social Centre; *Grandir Dignement* Association; YAG BARI; *Départemental* Observatory on Child Protection (ODPE) Youth Committee; *École pour Tous* Collective; La Comète; Prado Association, Bourgogne; the *De Vives Voix* troop; *Les Copil'Hôtes* ;
- *Droit d'Enfance*
- *Eclaireuses et Eclaireurs de France*
- Banon primary school
- Salvation Army Foundation, Saint-Malo, and Salvation Army Foundation, Mulhouse
- *Hors la Rue*
- International Institute for Human Rights and Peace
- *SAMU Social*
- *Secours Catholique*: *Secours Catholique*, Mayotte; *Secours Catholique*, Reunion Island, *Cités du Secours Catholique* associations
- *Solidarité Laïque*
- SOS Children's Villages
- UNICEF France
- *La Voix de l'Enfant*



Défenseur des droits
— RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE —