

Baseline survey on children on the move opinions in Kosovo 2012

Mario Project

REPORT

Child Participation Questionnaires – Mario Project

This report has been prepared based on the results of 20 child participation interviews which were conducted with children on the move¹, in the main cities of Kosova. The interview has been designed according to a child friendly perspective aiming to help children feel comfortable when talking about services they receive and what they would like from such services in the future.

The main aim of this report is to offer a clear picture of the children's voice, through some real figures gathered directly from the field. Children have expressed their own opinions, the difficulties they face, the needs they have, what makes them feel comfortable and what not, defining thus the most appropriate issues regarding children and highlighting where further interventions are needed.

The interview is based on the principle of child participation, giving them the space to freely talk about what they would like for themselves, what lacks in their life and what could be improved according to their needs and expectations.

The interview addresses 6 basic areas which directly affect children's wellbeing:

- 1. Conditions in the home/facility/residential unit**
- 2. Meaningful participation of children in planning and service delivery**
- 3. General accessibility to services**
- 4. Adequacy of services proposed and made available to children**
- 5. Safety and well-being of the child**
- 6. Future Prospects of children**

In total 20 interviews were conducted with children aged from 11-17 years old, coming from 6 different cities of Kosovo; Prishtina (5 children), Gjakova (5 children), Mitrovica (4 children), Peja (2 children), Ferizaj (2 children), Fushe Kosove (1 child) and Albania (1 child). Among them, 11 are girls and 9 are boys.

1. Conditions in the home/facility/residential unit

Explanation: Due to the strict rules and procedures regarding the residential units it was impossible to have access to such facilities. Therefore, all the children interviewed were staying in their families of origin even though they had been on the move before (traveling in different cities of Kosova) and some of them had been sheltered.

The first area is related to the conditions of the place where children are living. The ideas was for children to draw the place where they lived, trying to include the good things they like and the bad

¹ Children on the move includes: children who are separated, accompanied and unaccompanied children moving from one country to another or even within the country.

things they don't like in their drawings and for the researcher to ask questions based on what they drew. According to their drawings and expressed impressions, around 32% confirmed that there is nothing they like at home because the house itself or facilities within it are quite old.

A 15-year-old girl said: ***"There is just a yard and the walls. There is nothing else in this house, nothing I like of it".***

27% confirmed that they liked and enjoyed almost everything at home and in general there is nothing they don't like about the place where they live, even though they would change or improve some things in their houses but could not say exactly what.

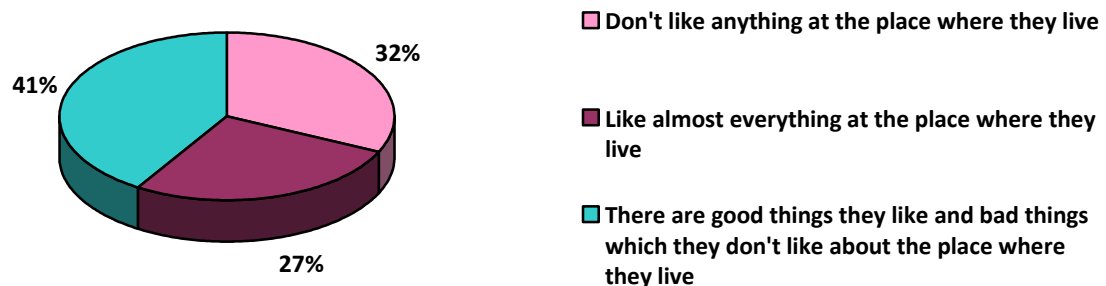
A 14-year-old girl says: ***"I like the entire house but mostly the yard with trees. There are some things I would like to have better but I like it anyways".***

The other 41% stressed that there are things they like and other things they would like to change in the places where they live but were not specific in what they said.

A 12-year-old boy said: ***"I like the trees around the house. I don't like the yard when it's a mess and I don't like the snow around my house because it's too cold".***

According to the answers we can affirm that most of them enjoy very much the green gardens, the green spaces, trees and flowers around their houses. Among the things which were disliked from the children, generally were the very old and destroyed facilities they had at home. A fact which needs to be highlighted regarding the first area is that all of the children interviewed, were living in houses with yards, open spaces around and none of them was living in apartment blocks.

Conditions at the place where children live



2. Meaningful participation of children in planning and service delivery

The second area is related to the participation of children in planning and service delivery. Within this area, children were asked 4 questions:

- If adults² involve them in discussions and decisions about their lives

² Any adult who lives in the same environment with the child, such as: parents, relatives, foster families and/or professionals working in residential institutions.

- If they would like adults to involve them in discussions and decisions
- What would they like adults to discuss and involve them in discussions about
- How would they like adults to do this with them

• **Do adults involve children in discussions and decisions about their lives?**

54% of the children confirmed that actually they are never involved in discussions or decisions about their lives. Their answers confirmed that adults discuss alone without involving children, decide about things that have to do with children and inform them at the end when they have already taken the decision.

A 17-year-old boy confirms: ***“They want to force me and don’t involve me in discussions. They don’t hear what I want”.***

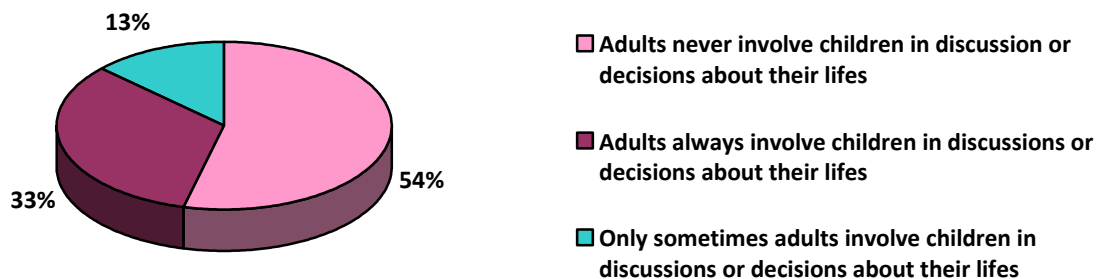
33% of children answered that they feel they are involved in discussions and decisions adults take about their lives. They confessed that they share ideas sometimes, give opinions and agree together on things.

A 12-year-old boy says: ***“Yes, they always involve me and take in consideration my opinion, even when I was going on the street”.***

13% of the children interviewed commented that only sometimes adults ask and involve them in discussions related to their lives. At other times or when it comes to some complex issues they prefer to take decisions alone without involving children.

A 15-year-old girl comments: ***“Yes they involve me but only for the good things related to me. When it comes to bad things I do they don’t ask me but take decisions themselves”.***

Do adults involve children in discussions and decisions about their lives?



• **Do children like adults to involve them in discussions or decisions about their lives?**

The second question is related whether the children would like to be involved in these discussions and decisions of adult in their lives. Approximately 94% of the children answered with certainty that they want to be involved in discussions with adults because they want to share and express their opinions and they want to be asked for what they like or not.

A 17-year-old boy, states: ***“I would like to share what I think because I know I am intelligent and I can give them valuable opinions and ideas”.***

6% of all children who were interviewed confessed that they do not like to be very much involved and to interfere in adult’s decisions. They prefer to listen to what adults say or advice and to follow their request.

In this regard, a 12 years old boy states: ***“Even though they do actually involve me in what they discuss, I don’t want to be too much involved because I don’t want to interfere in their decisions”.***

Do children like adults to involve them in discussions or decisions about their lives?



- **What would children like adults to discuss with them and involve them in?**

The third question of this area is related to the topics that children would mostly like to discuss and talk about, with adults. 54% of the children stated that they would like to talk more about education; school, learning, how they feel at school and about the relations they have with teachers and classmates.

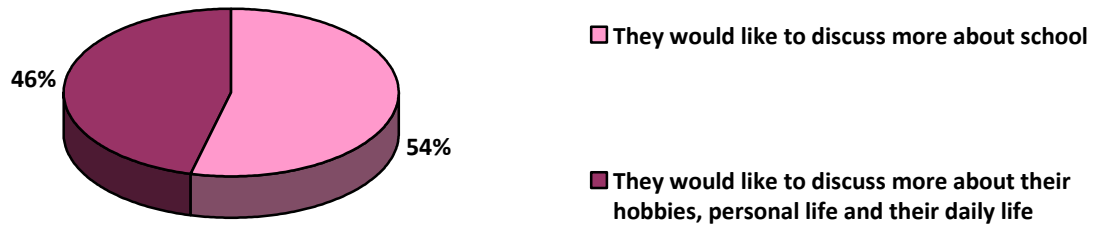
One of the children, a 14-year-old boy stated: ***“I would like to talk more about school with my family. I would like them to be more interested about my future and things I can do (such as courses) in order to have a profession when I grow up”.***

46% of the children, when asked about what would they mostly like to talk with adults, stated that they want to be asked and to talk more about their hobbies, the different things that happen in their personal life, the daily life and their rights.

In this regard, a 17-year-old boy says: ***“I would like them to be more open and to discuss more with me about dancing, which a practice and enjoy a lot. I am part of a dancing group and they don’t like at all this idea, saying to me that it is for women”.***

In general, we can say all the children would like to spend more time with their families, to be all together and to talk amongst themselves on different things. At the same time, children want to talk more about the school where they spent a considerable part of the day, shows the fact that they want to share and be listened to more about their experiences and events which happen in their life, with their families.

What would children like adults to discuss with them and involve them in?



- **How would children like adults to involve them in discussions and decisions about their life?**

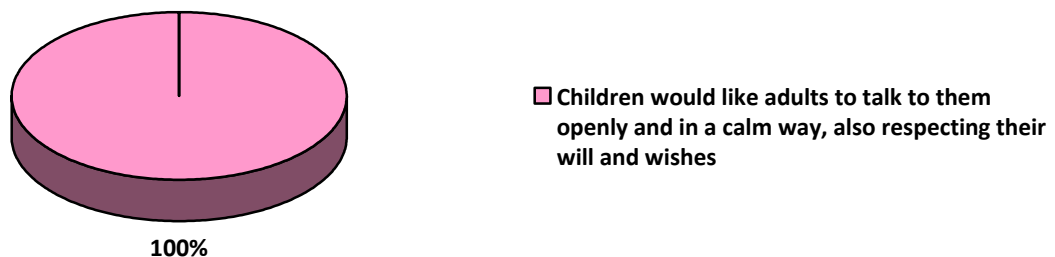
The fourth and last question conducted within the second area is related to how the children perceive their involvement and how would they like adults to do this with them. 100% of the children stated that they would like adults to talk with them openly and in calm way, and at the same time respecting their will and wishes.

For example, a 15-year-old girl says: ***"I would like all my family to seat in our room together and talk to me in a calm way, because they yell at me often"***.

What is important to highlight regarding the second area, is the fact that children seem to be aware of what they need from adults in terms of communicating with them, sharing the most important and relevant things that happen in their daily life and feeling that adults do pay attention and are cautious to the way they experience different events of their life.

According to their comments, children need to feel loved, accepted, involved, respected and understood from adults and they give a vast importance to the affective relationship with adults around them.

How would children like adults to involve them in discussions / decisions about their life?



3. General accessibility to services

The third area is related to the general accessibility of children to various services. Children pointed out whether they were happy, sad or didn't have any feeling at all regarding these services, in terms of the

accessibility and the way how they feel for that specific service. In total eight services were presented to the children:

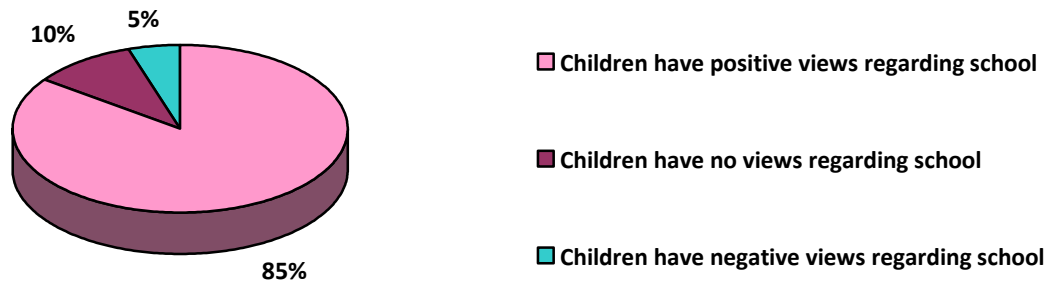
- **School**
- **Doctor**
- **Transport**
- **Dentist**
- **Police**
- **Playground**
- **Nurse**

School

Regarding the first service – school, children generally expressed positive views in terms of accessibility and the way how they feel there even though some of them were not attending school anymore.

85% of the children interviewed expressed positive views for the school considering it as a very positive environment. Approximately 10% of them did not express and positive or negative feeling and only 5% expressed a negative view regarding school.

School

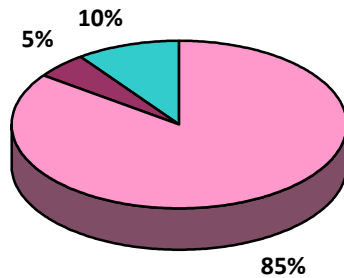


Doctor

In terms of health services, children were asked to express their views towards doctors. Generally speaking, children share positive opinion regarding doctors.

Around 85% of them expressed positive views for this service, considering it to be a very helpful service where they are treated well. 5% of them did not express and positive or negative feeling and 10% of the children expressed negative views for doctors stating the reason they are not good enough as professionals.

Doctor



Children have positive views regarding doctor

Children have no views regarding doctors

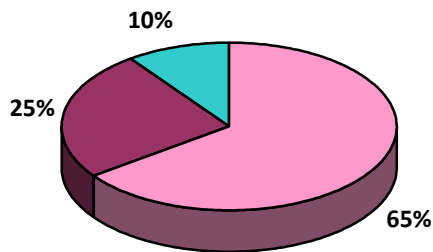
Children have negative views regarding doctor

Transport

Regarding the transport, children in general stated that they have had the chance to travel not only within the city but also from one city to the other. In general they have been welcomed and sometimes they didn't have to buy tickets and the travel has been free of charge for them.

Almost 65% of them expressed positive views for the transport, 25% of them didn't have any significant comment about this service and only 10% of them were not satisfied and expressed negative views regarding transport.

Transport



Children have positive views regarding transport

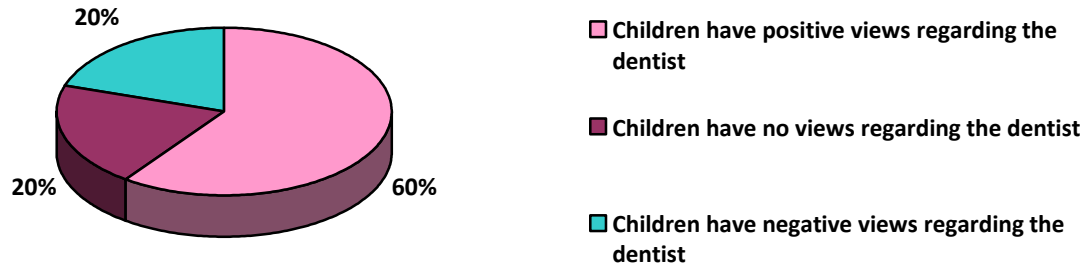
Children have no views regarding transport

Children have negative views regarding transport

Dentist

Generally children are satisfied with this service, stating that they feel comfortable with the service they receive from the dentist and are treated quite well. Around 60% of the children expressed positive views for the dentist, 20% of them didn't have any significant comment and the remained part of 20% of the interviewed children were not satisfied and expressed negative views regarding this health service.

Dentist

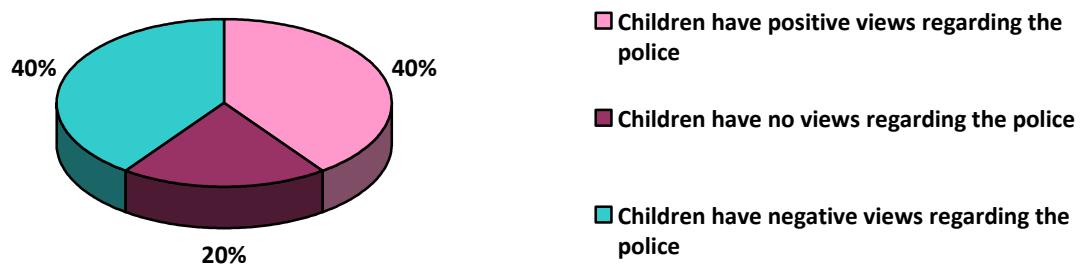


Police

Among all the listed services which were presented to the interviewed children, police is the least preferred by them. A considerable percentage of children have negative views in regards to police. A part of them say that often the police don't behave well with them in terms of communication and that in general they have an authoritarian attitude towards children.

For this service, 40% of the children expressed positive views for the police service, 20% of them didn't comment on the service and 40% of the children expressed negative views for the police.

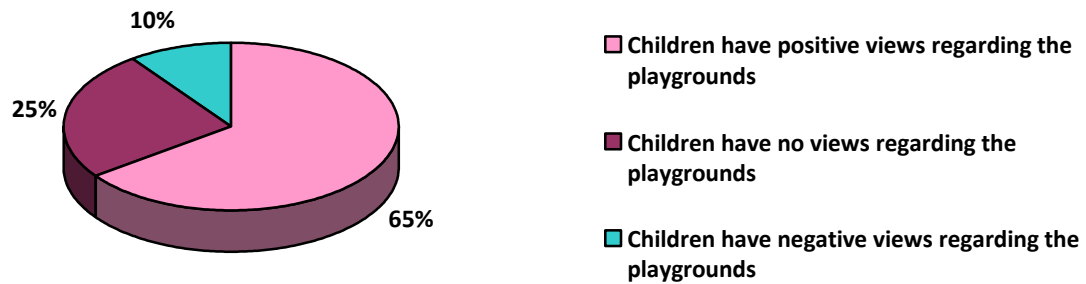
Police



Playground

Playgrounds are quite favorite according to children's views. Mainly, children commented that they have playground in their cities where they go often and have a great time. Approximately 65% of the children expressed positive views to the playground services; around 25% of them did not have any specific feeling claiming that now they don't go anymore because they are older and 10% of them expressed negative views for the playgrounds.

Playgrounds

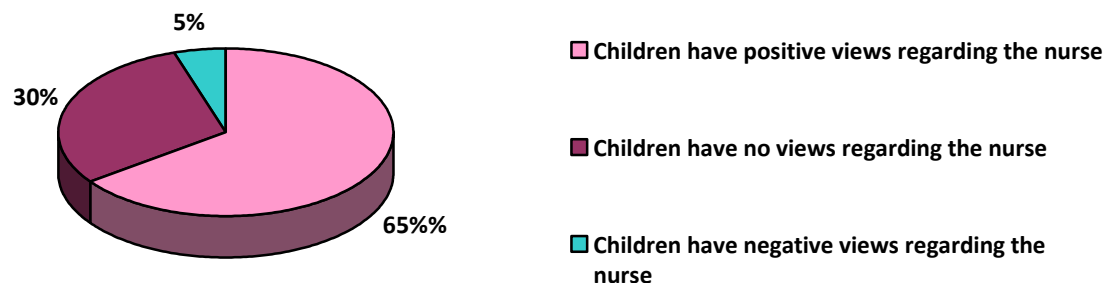


Nurse

The last service presented to the interviewed children was the nurse. In this case, it is important to highlight that for children it was difficult to separate the concept of doctor and nurse and mostly they considered both professions as one. However, an explanation was given to them to help them understand the difference.

65% of the interviewed children expressed positive views for the nurse comparing the nurse with the doctor; around 30% of them didn't have comments saying that they don't know exactly what the nurse is and 5% of them expressed negative views for the nurse.

Nurse



Generally talking about all services which were listed to children, they have quite positive views toward them. Children expressed more positive views about the doctor which means that according to them, health service is best tailored to their needs. In terms of accessibility, care, approach and treatment, the interviewed children expressed their appreciation towards this service. On the other hand, they shared less positive views regarding the police, especially pointing the authoritarian manner that police use when communicating with children.

4. Adequacy of services proposed and made available to children

The fourth area was designed in order to see from children's perspective the adequacy of services which are available to children, if they are tailored and adapted according to their needs and what they would like to improve further. Children were asked to write three wishes, about three services they would like to have in the communities where they live.

According to the answers of children, basically the highest percentage of them asked to have better living conditions and improvements in their environment.

Around 85% of the interviewed children wrote in their wishes they would like to have:

- Better streets, cleaner neighborhoods without garbage and more trash bins around it,
- The police to be more present in the neighborhood in order to help preventing different kind of offenses, to remove the street dogs which may be dangerous
- Better houses within their neighborhood
- More green spaces where they could play with their friends.
- They also asked for playgrounds to be provided in their neighborhoods because sometimes they exist but only in the center of the city and according to them, they can't go there very often and also to have parking lots where cars could be parked, creating thus more free space for them to play with friends. Some of the children also asked to have a fountain which would have decorated their neighborhood or a swimming pool to spend their free time during the summer.

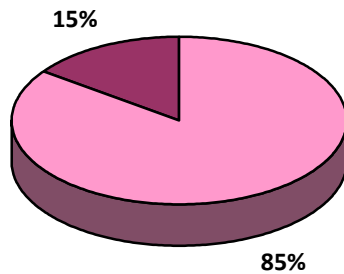
Related to this, a 15-year-old girl stated: ***"Well, I want first better streets in my neighborhood, a cleaner environment outside my house and I want my neighborhood to have better and newer houses around"***.

Another girl of 14 years of age, explained: ***"I would like my house and yard to be better and orderly, my neighborhood to be cleaner and without garbage around and to have more green spaces with trees and flowers"***.

Same as the others, a 12-year-old boy commented: ***"I would like to have playground in my neighborhood because they are far from the place where I live, I want to have a parking lot in order to have no cars parked around and to have more space for me and my friends to play and I want to have better streets"***.

15% of the children asked mainly for improved and better facilities within their homes, such as newer and modern furniture within their houses, internet access at home, animals etc.

Adequacy of services proposed and made available to children



□ Children want to improve the living and environment conditions in their neighborhoods

■ Children want to have better conditions and facilities inside their homes

5. Safety and well-being of the child

The fifth area is basically related to the safety and well-being of the children, from their own perspective. It was divided in two parts; the first regarding their safety and the second their well being. The main aim was to see and obtain from their own considerations what makes these children feel safe and what they consider important for them to grow up and what help they need from adults in order to achieve this.

Safety

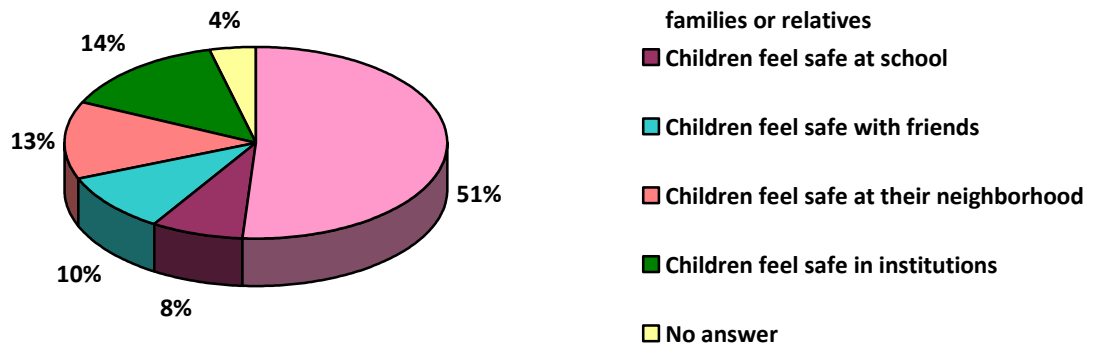
In the first part children were asked to write or draw five main things which make them feel safe, in terms of persons, places or situations. Each of the children wrote five main things which make him/her feel safe, making thus in total 100 answers. **Based on children's answers, we can basically confirm that home, family and close relatives (such as grandparents, aunts and uncles) remain the best way for children to feel safe.**

In 51% of the answers, children considered staying at home, with the family or relatives as the main thing which makes them feel safe. In approximately 8% of their answers school was listed as one of the places which make them feel safe, in 10% of the answers friends were stated as people which make children feel safe, 13% of the answers considered the neighborhood as a safe place, 14% of the answers confirmed institutions (Center for Social Work, foster family, shelter, Police, NGOs and various courses) as safe places to be according to children and 4% of the answers was left blank / without any answer, from children.

A 12-year-old boy state: ***"I feel safe when I am with my family, when I am at home, within my neighborhood, at school and when I am with my friends"***.

Another child, a 14-year-old girl, says: ***"I feel safe when I am with my family or my relatives. I also feel safe at school, in my neighborhood and when I am with the Social Worker"***.

Safety



Well-being

In the second part, children were asked to write eight things about what is important for them to grow up and what help do they need from adults in order to grow up. Each of the interviewed children expressed eight main considerations on what is more important to them in growing up, making in this way a total of 160 “thoughts” of children in this regard.

The analyses of this part show that about 38% of the answers of children considered the living conditions as the most important thing for them to grow up and for which they do need adult’s help. The living conditions mentioned by the interviewed children consisted of better, cleaner and warmer houses, new and better furniture or facilities at home, more food and clothes, having the necessary time to sleep and also to rest.

Approximately 22% of all 120 answers considered education in general as highly important for the children to grow up and for which they would like to have more help and support from adults. In this context, children did not talk exclusively only for school but also regarding the learning process, different courses or activities that they might be interested to attend, the continuous help from their family regarding school and homework in order to take good grades and also about the importance of pedagogical material in this whole issue.

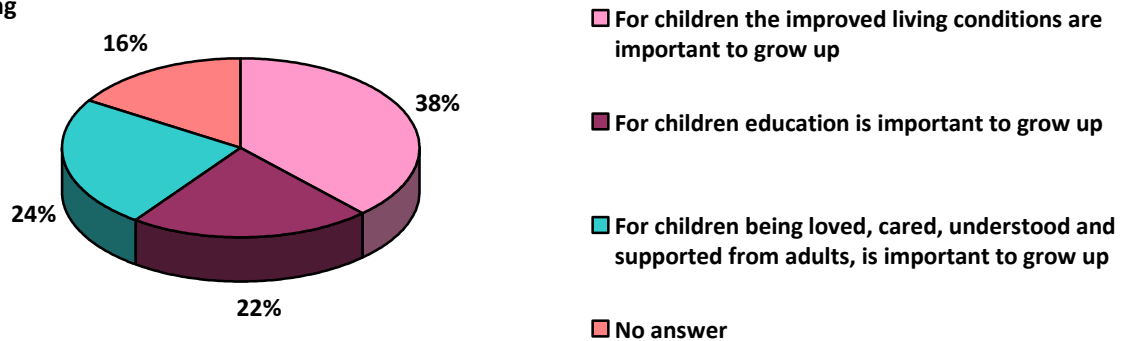
24% of all the answers stated love, support and care of adults toward them as an important part of their life in growing up. Children listed as very important the love and care they receive from their parents and families as helpful and necessary for them to grow up and at the same time the importance of spending time together, conducting different activities with families, going out and having pleasant times with their loved ones.

16% of the answers were left blank without any comment from the children.

A 14-year-old boy is: ***“According to me, the most important things to grow up are learning continuously, having enough food, enough clothes, being healthy, having a clean and warm house, attending school regularly and having the necessary pedagogical materials to be able to learn and achieve good academic results at school”.***

A 14-year-old girl stated: ***“For me while growing up is important to have enough food and clothes, to have a warmer house and a better environment at home, to go regularly in school, to have the love of my parents and their care and also to always have a good time with my family”.***

Well-being



6. Future Prospects of children

The sixth and last area of this interview was designed to observe and have a clear picture about the future prospects of children and to know how they foresee their future. Children were asked to write what they want to be when they are older, what will help them to be what they want to be and what they need from adults to help them achieving their final goal.

According to the answers given from children, it is important to highlight that all of them have ambitious expectations for their future careers and would like to have well paid professions or jobs. Even though their current situation doesn't promise much, children seem to be confident and optimistic regarding their future.

Among their answers we can mention that mostly children expressed the wish to become doctors or nurses in the future but there were also others who wanted to become a hairdresser, a pilot, a teacher, a chef, join the police, a football player, a singer etc.

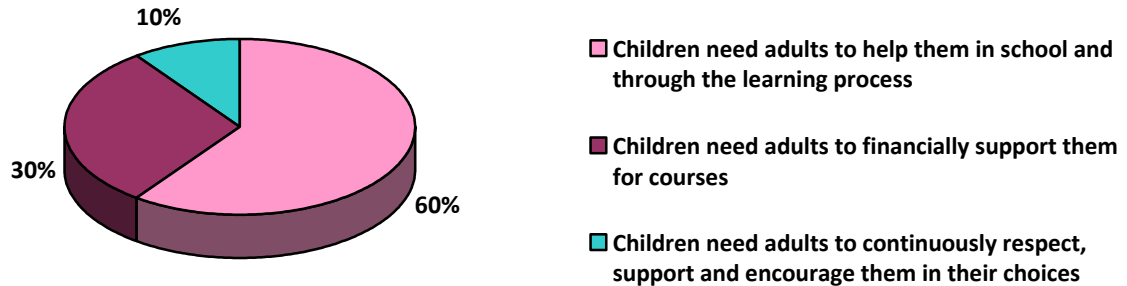
Regarding the help and support they need from adults, 60% of the interviewed children stated that adults should help them to integrate in school and help them during the learning process.

Around 30% of them said they need from adults to help them in terms of financial support to pay potential courses they need to register in order to have a profession when they grow up and the last part of 10% of them commented that they can manage to reach their goal but for them it is important to have a continuous respect, support and encouragement from their families and other adults.

A 12 year-old-boy commented: ***“I would like very much to become a professional football player. I know that mainly I need to regularly exercise a lot, in order to achieve what I want. I need from adults to find me a proper football course and also to help me register and pay this course”.***

A 16-year-old girl said: ***“I would like very much to become a hairdresser in the future. What I most need to achieve this goal, is to attend a hairdressing course in order to learn this profession. The help I need from adults is to financially support me to pay this course which my family cannot afford”.***

Future prospects of children



Conclusions and recommendations!

According children, green spaces in their surrounding environment is a very important and appreciated element for their wellbeing. From the children’s perspectives it is seen as one more chance to play with friends, interact with peers and at the same time enjoy the fresh air and the environment.

In this context improving and extending green spaces within neighborhoods, can be a positive element towards providing more opportunities for children to spend time in healthy ways and to interact more with their peers.

It is important to highlight that according to what children said the family relationships are essential for their wellbeing. Children want to feel more part of the family not only in terms of being members, but also in terms of feeling accepted, loved and heard. They want to spend more time with their family and discuss everything that concerns them.

It is important thus to work in this direction. Improving the quality of family relations and developing healthy and relationship among other members and the child, helps the child to feel that he or she has his/her own personality which is accepted and encouraged to further develop its milestones.

When talking about the different services children receive, they look quite positively towards most of them. In general children don’t seem to have very high expectations from the services they receive. According to them, the most important thing is how these professionals welcome them, how they communicate and behave towards them.

In this regard, further capacity building of professionals who provide services towards children might be taken in consideration. This capacity building should especially focus on the direct contacts with children and on the most important elements or steps to follow while interviewing or offering a specific service to children.

Children seem to be very clear on what lacks in their living environment and they seem clear and specific on what should be improved in these environments. Even though they know the priorities in terms of what needs to be improved first in their neighborhoods, they still find some space to express some requests related to their age and to the need of the free time they like to spend with friends.



The improvement of some basic and fundamental living conditions is another area in which more attention should be paid. It is important to provide children with the needed elements to help them feel that they are living a decent life and to create thus a warm belonging environment for them.

Children tend to remain in the environment familiar to them, such as places they already know very well and people they love or trust. Still family is the most essential element in their views.

Taking in consideration the advantages of a positive and healthy relationship and on the other hand the harm that a damaged relationship can cause to the child, service providers and other professionals working in the child protection field, should focus and pay more attention in promoting and enhancing such relations as it is in the best interest of the child.

Children give a lot of importance to their future. They seem to have clear ideas about their future even though they are aware that at present it may not promise much. Children also seem to know what they mainly need to achieve their goals. Not only in material or financial means; one of their main requests remains to be loved and cared from by families.

In this regard it is important to increase and improve the educational services towards children and at the same time their availability and accessibility. More efforts should be made in facilitating, accelerating for children's enrollment the education system.