



CHILDREN'S VOICE

to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
by Children of Republic of Korea



Save the Children
Korea



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Save the Children Korea and Research Team for Children's Report Project are grateful to all the children who participated in the activities of this report such as a survey, the rights education program, and interviews, and also to their guardians.

Those children who have shared their thoughts, experiences, and concerns throughout the processes of making this report, hope that their voices contained in this report will be heard by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as the government of Republic of Korea(ROK), and based on them, there will be substantial improvements in the realization of the rights of the child.

Save the Children Korea and Research Team for Children's Report Project would like to give our special thanks to the following organizations which helped arrange meetings with the children for this report.

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I. INTRODUCTION


This report is children's report that contains vivid expressions of the children of the Republic of Korea(ROK) on what they think about their rights. This is ROK's first children's report addressed to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child(Committee), and presents what the children under various circumstances directly told us about what rights they think are being violated. This report was prepared in full consideration of the principle of participation of the child as stipulated in the Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which says that the child has the right to express his or her own views freely in all matters affecting the child, and should have the opportunity to be heard either directly or through a representative.

PURPOSE OF CHILDREN'S REPORT

Since ROK ratified UN Convention on the Rights of the Child(CRC) in 1991, ROK went through the Committee's review of the state reports twice. And, ROK is awaiting the review of its 3rd and 4th combined report submitted to the Committee, which will be conducted in 2011. When the State Party's report is submitted to the Committee, non-governmental organizations working on the rights of the child can also submit reports evaluating the level of implementation of the state obligations under the Convention. Therefore, non-governmental organizations of ROK have submitted their reports to the Committee in parallel with the state reports. However, until now, there was no report from ROK in which children themselves talk about the realities of the rights of the child in ROK.

We prepared this report in the expectation that if the voices of the children of ROK are directly conveyed to the Committee, the best interests of the child will be better reflected when the Committee makes recommendations for the government of ROK.

Having children themselves voice out in the whole process of examining whether the basic rights of the child are guaranteed, can be said to be essential for the realization of the right to participation as stipulated in the CRC. The right to participation which is one of the key principles of the CRC is one of the least respected rights. The children we met also pointed out the right to express their opinions as one of the least respected rights.



Over the period of one year, we met children under various circumstances and asked them what it is like to live in ROK as a child, how much they know about their own rights, what rights are being violated, and what should be done to improve the situation. This report was written by the adults who listened to the children and documented their voices. But, we minimized adding adult's interpretations to the voices of the children, as our intention is to convey the thoughts of the children on the rights being respected and not respected, as faithfully as possible.

CHILDREN WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE REPORT

The total number of children who participated in the activities of this report is 671. 564 children participated in the Internet survey, while 107 children (50 males, 57 females) participated in the child rights education program and the interviews. The age distribution of the children who participated in the activities of this report is shown in the table below.

4 years old or under	5 years old	6 years old	7 years old	8 years old	9 years old	10 years old	11 years old
2	4	5	16	24	59	134	124
12 years old	13 years old	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	17 years old	18 years old	Total
77	34	32	32	48	33	47	671

Table 1 Age distribution of the children who participated

The children who participated in the Internet survey are children who are below 18 years old without any particular groupings or characteristics. On the other hand, the child rights education program and the successive group or in-depth interviews were offered to selected individuals or groups of children who have been in the relatively poor social environments or who are more vulnerable to the rapid changes of the ROK society.

These selected 107 children belong to the following groups; children with economic hardships(11 children), children living in facilities(12 children), children living in rural areas(61 children), children from North Korean defector



families(8 children), children whose parents have different nationalities(8 children), children with disabilities(3 children), children whose parents are migrant workers(2 children), refugee child(1 child), teenage single mother(1 child).

PROCESSES OF PREPARING THE REPORT

The survey, the child rights education program, and the interviews were carried out between April and December 2010, following the three steps as follows.

1) INTERNET SURVEY

Internet survey was carried out in order to get ROK children's views on the rights of the child comprehensively. Internet portal site for children(www.jr.naver.com) was used for the survey, and the answers of 564 respondents out of the total 3,071 respondents, taking out adults and duplicated respondents, were used for this report.

2) CHILD RIGHTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

A program educating the necessity of the rights of the child, basic concepts of rights, underlying principles of the CRC was offered to each group of children, in 5~10 sessions over the period of 2~5 months. The program used various methods such as game, quiz, and debate, depending on the age of the children, and included various activities for play such as swimming and other leisure activities. Also, to meet the needs of each group, 3-day camp-out was offered.

The program was conducted with the help of the trained volunteers who are members of the university child rights expert group, under the leadership of the researchers responsible for writing this report. Also, the program put emphasis on not only creating a space to listen to the children, but also supporting the children to be empowered as the main agents of their rights.

3) IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

For some children who were identified as needing more in-depth personal interview during the group activities of the above education program, one-to-one interview or a small group interview was conducted. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with the children with disabilities, a refugee child, children whose parents are migrant workers, and a teenage single mother, making personal visits.

We adequately explained the purpose of the program and the interview to the participating children, and encouraged their voluntary participation while making efforts to ensure equal opportunity for all children to express their opinions. Also, there were clear procedures to get children's consent to the usage of their statements, art works, voices as well as their images in photos and video recordings, and also from their parents or guardians. Any of them which did not get all the necessary approvals was not used in this report. Also, all the expressions of the children in this report are presented anonymously for the protection of personal information of the child.

This report contains the results of the Internet survey and the voices of the children who participated in the child rights education program and their wishes for the realization of their rights. Also, we produced a video along with this report, in order to present the voices of the children more vividly. We would like to note that this report does not cover all the rights specified in the CRC and their implementation, but rather deals with only certain rights that are related with what the children directly mentioned.

*Figure 1 Letters to Mrs. Rights:
Children's letters addressed to the UN
Committee on the Rights of the Child*





CHILDREN'S VOICE

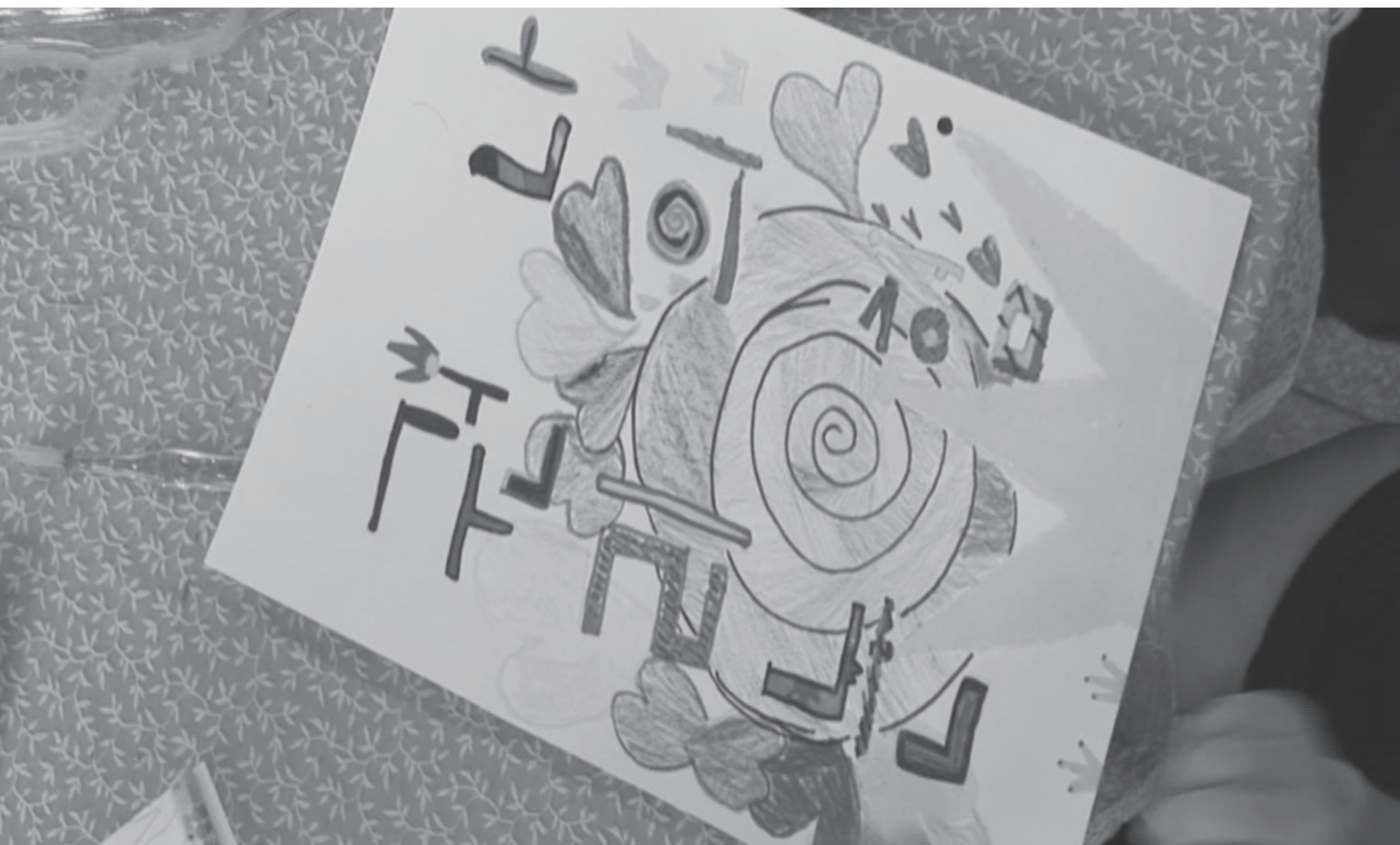
to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
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II. VOICES OF CHILDREN¹ : INTERNET SURVEY

Internet survey was carried out in order to get a comprehensive understanding on how much the children of ROK are familiar with the rights of the child, and what are the rights that are being respected and not respected. ROK has the highest Internet penetration rate among the OECD countries, which is 94.3%(as of 2008).¹ It is said that 85% of 3~9 year-old children and 99.9% of teenagers in ROK use the Internet frequently, which makes the Internet survey to assess children's awareness on the rights of the child particularly useful. The survey was carried out from May 3 to May 31.

Survey questions are about children's prior knowledge on the rights of the child including the age range of the child, which rights are being respected and which are not, what kinds of help children can get when their rights are violated, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. After a child answers each question, related information about the rights of the child is provided. Selection of the responses that were used in the final analysis was made in the following procedures.

★ **Subjects of analysis:** Children who are 18 years old or under as of the final day of the survey (May 31, 2010)

★ **Data selection process:**

1. Total number of respondents across all ages: 3,071
2. Number of selected respondents who are 18 years old or under: 598
3. Number of deleted respondents due to the overlapping responses by the same person: 34 (Only first response was taken among the overlapping ones – minimizing the bias)

★ **Number of respondents whose responses were used for final analysis:** 564

The age range of the 564 child respondents who participated in the Internet survey is shown in [Table 2] below. The age group with the largest number of respondents is 10-year-old group with 110 respondents(19.5%), followed by 11-year-old group(93 respondents, 16.5%), 12-year-old group(59 respondents, 10.5%), and 9-year-old group(57 respondents, 10.1%).

¹ Source: Homepage of the Korea National Statistical Office (Web searched on February 25, 2010)

Age	4 or under ²	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total
No. of respondents	2	4	5	15	22	57	110	93	59	31	23	27	37	32	47	564
%	0.4	0.7	0.9	2.7	3.9	10.1	19.5	16.5	10.5	5.5	4.1	4.8	6.6	5.7	8.3	100

Table 2 Age distribution of the respondents in the Internet survey

The results of the Internet survey 'Learning the Rights of the Child' participated by the children of ROK are as follows:

1. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE RIGHTS?

Before going into other questions in the survey, children were asked about their prior experience with rights. 68.1%(384 children) of the entire respondents said that they have heard of the rights, while 31.9%(180 children) responded negatively.

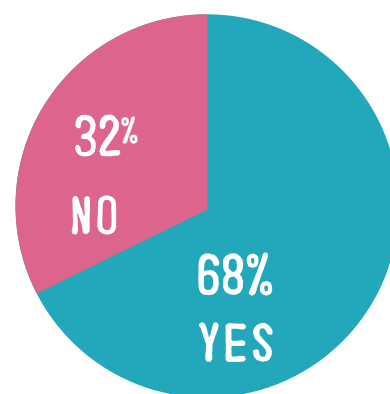


Figure 2 Have you heard of the rights?

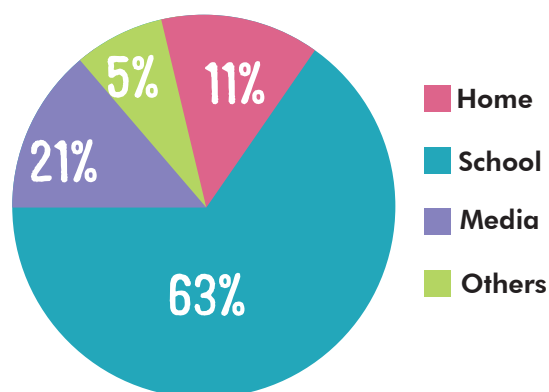


Figure 3 Where did you hear of the rights?

Children living in ROK heard of the rights mainly through their schools(242 children, 63%) and the media(82 children, 21.4%). 10.9% and 4.7% of the respondents said that they heard of the rights at homes and welfare facilities respectively.

2. WHAT IS THE AGE RANGE OF A CHILD?

The second question was about the definition of a child in terms of the age. 288 children, which is more than a half of the entire respondents, thought someone who is between 0-12 years old is a child. Only 121 children(21.5%) chose the answer '0-18 years old', which is what the CRC defines the child as.

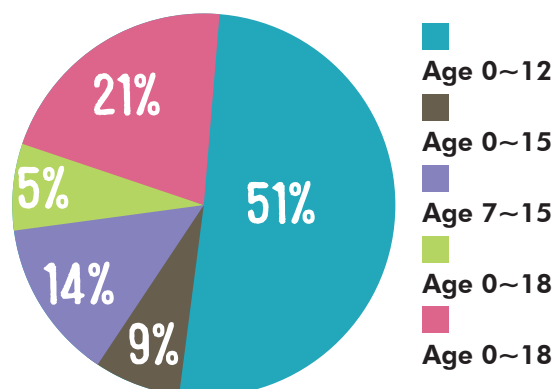


Figure 4 What is the age range of a child?

² Parents helped children out to participate in the survey because of their insufficient reading comprehension

3. DO YOU THINK CHILDREN HAVE RIGHTS AS HUMAN BEINGS?

To the question whether they think children have rights as human beings, 96.8% of the entire respondents(546 children) responded with yes. The reasons given by those who said no included “because children are too young”(9 children) and “because children need help from adults”(2 children).

4. WHAT RIGHTS DO WE HAVE AS CHILDREN?

Regarding which rights of the children living ROK are being respected and which are not, there were 18 questions touching on the issues like food/clothing/shelter, education, play and leisure, health care, information, harmful media, participation, and protection from violence and abuse. Children could choose more than one to these questions. The rights of the children living in ROK that are being most well respected were “I can drink clean water”(544 children), “I go to school”(540 children), “There is a house I live in”(539 children). The rights that are being least respected were “I have enough time to play”(267 children), “I do not watch strange videos on TV or Internet”(172 children), and “I do not have to show my personal diary to anyone else”(147 children).

Number of respondents	%	Rights being respected	Ranking	Rights not respected	Number of respondents	%
544	96.6	I can drink clean water.	1	I have enough time to play.	267	47.3
540	95.9	I go to school.	2	I do not watch strange videos on TV or Internet.	172	30.5
539	95.7	There is a house I live in.	3	I do not have to show my personal diary to anyone else.	147	26.1
536	95.2	I am a citizen of ROK.	4	I can run and play freely outside.	141	25.0
536	95.2	There are adults who take care of me.	5	Mom and Dad listen to me well.	132	23.4
530	94.1	I can go to hospital when I am sick.	6	I can freely express my opinions.	121	21.5
518	92.0	I can get information from radio, newspaper, TV, Internet, books, etc.	7	I am protected from dangerous people.	108	19.1

Table 3 Rights that are respected and that are not?

5. WHEN MY RIGHTS ARE NOT RESPECTED, WITH WHOM DO I SPEAK?

On the question about what types of external resources are available for children to ask for help when their rights are not respected, children could choose from parents, siblings, friends, other family members, school teachers, teachers at religious/private educational institute, emergency calls, and community welfare center/child organization (multiple answers possible).

The results show that the greatest number of respondents said they “talk to parents”(463 children), followed by friends(232 children), school teachers(176 children), siblings(136 children), emergency calls(75 children), teachers at religious or private educational institute(46 children), and other family members(18 children), with no one choosing community welfare centers or child organizations.

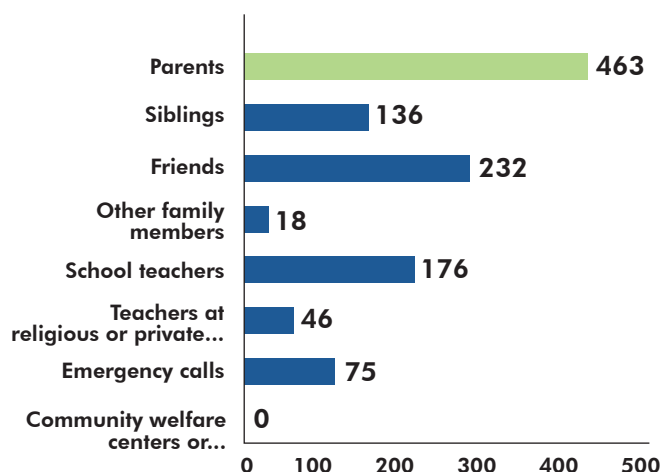


Figure 5 When my rights are not respected, with whom do I speak?whom do I speak?

6. CAN A CHILD GET LEGAL PROTECTION WHEN HER/HIS RIGHT WAS VIOLATED?

To the question whether a child can get legal protection when her/his right was violated, 532 children(94.3%) answered “Yes”, while 32 children(5.7%) answered “No”.

7. HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD?

To the question whether they have heard about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 301 children(53.4%) answered that they have not heard of the Convention, while 263 children(46.6%) said they have.

SUMMARY

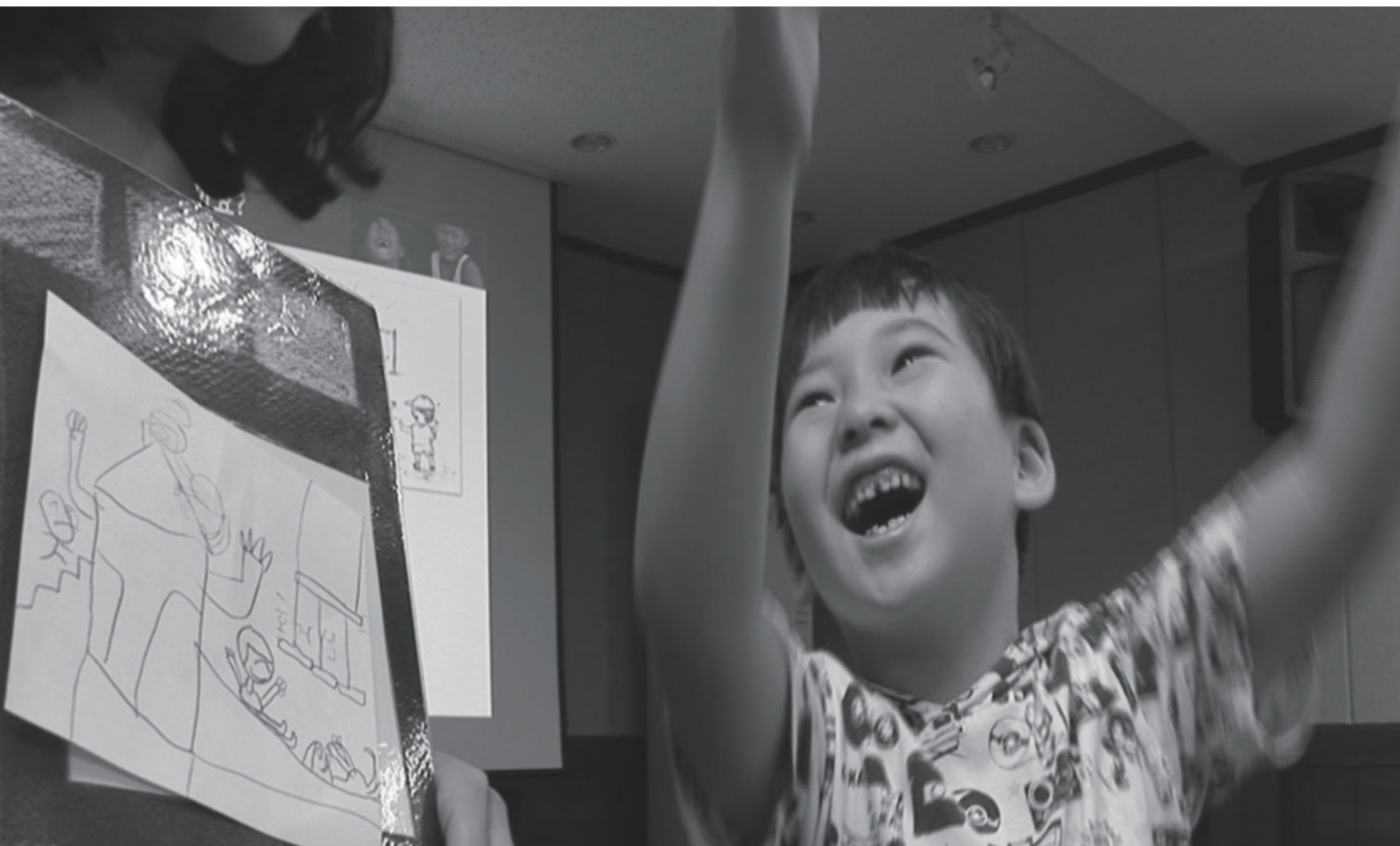
This survey was carried out with the participation of 564 children who are 18 years old or under. The responses of the children who participated in the survey can be summarized as follows.

1. 68.1%(384 children) of the entire respondents said they have heard of the rights. But, 53.4% of the entire respondents said that they have not heard of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These results show that still more than 30% of the children of ROK do not know what rights are.
2. Among the children who have heard of the rights, approximately 85% of them heard of the rights through schools and the media. This means that the methods of delivering education on rights and related information are limited, with concentration in only a few channels.
3. As for the rights of ROK children that are being well respected, issues that are related with the right to survival such as food/clothing/shelter, school education, nationality and identity, health care facilities have been identified as the rights that are relatively well guaranteed. On the other hand, other rights related with play and leisure, privacy, protection from harmful media, and free expression have been identified as the rights that are not well respected. Such results show that the rights of children related with survival are relatively well protected in ROK, while other sets of rights need improvements.
4. Children said they would seek help mainly from parents, friends, and school teachers when their rights are not respected. Number of children who said they would seek help from other adults, emergency calls, community welfare centers or child organizations was rather small.



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III. VOICES OF CHILDREN 2 : CHILD RIGHTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

"My mom forced me to study at home every day.
I realized from this camp that my rights had not been respected,
and felt upset about my mom.
I thought that I should enjoy my rights from now on." (Age 14, boy)

"Now I am learning about rights. Frankly speaking, I have ignored the rights of others. From now on, I
should be more careful about it." (Age 14, boy)

This chapter contains the voices of the children we met through Rights Education Program, "Hey~Rights, Let's play!" which took various forms such as a workshop and a camp. The children talked about their rights which have not been respected in their own lives, and discussed what they could do themselves to have these rights respected.



Figure 6 Expression of UN CRC
Article 12 (Anonym)

"Right to participation: We have a
right to freely express our views in all
matters affecting us. Adults should
take what we say seriously."

The rights of the child which are not respected have been identified, and they are related with respect for child's opinion, play and leisure, non- discrimination, protection from violence and abuse, the right to privacy, in the order of the severity of the problem.

1. RESPECT FOR CHILD'S OPINION

[Article 12] The right of the child to be heard

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Respect for opinion of the child and child's participation comes the first among the rights that are not respected for the children of ROK. They spoke about many cases when they were forced to do things that they did not like, not knowing



why they have to do them or without being given necessary explanations. In many times, children could not take part in the decision-making processes even in matters that were directly related with them. A considerable number of adults showed the attitude of ‘Just do it and no questions asked’, not listening to the child. Moreover, they treated the child who expressed his/her opinion as rude, which makes it more difficult for the child to express their own views. Various situations in which child’s opinions are not respected can be categorized into the following: in school and at home.

1-1. RESPECT FOR CHILD’S OPINION IN SCHOOL

RIGHTS NOT RESPECTED IN SCHOOL AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

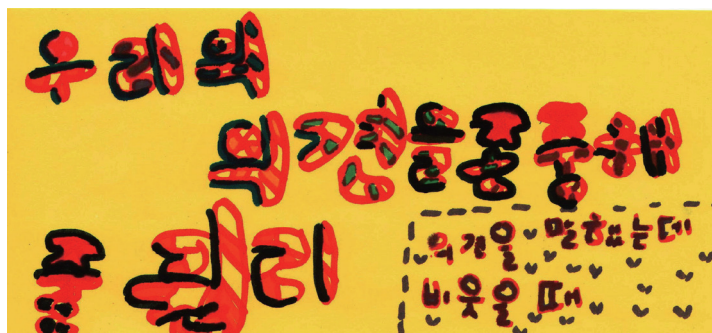
1) INTERACTIONS WITH SCHOOL TEACHERS

“When raising my hand to ask a math problem, he passes me by” (Age 10, girl)

“Ignoring what I said” (Age 11, girl)

“Punishing me with no good reason” (Age 11, girl)

“When a teacher not listening to me” (Age 11, girl)



“Our right to be heard was not respected when they laughed at my opinion”

Figure 7 The right not respected as expressed by one child (Anonym)

“Teacher not listening to me, and telling me off” (Age 10, boy)

“In my school, teachers ask for our ideas, but in the end, lead us into their opinions, never considering what we have said. Teachers tell us that we have to clarify our opinions. But, when I express my opinion that I don’t want to do a certain thing, they think I am defying them. I feel irritated and annoyed even though they are my teachers.” (Age 12, girl)

RIGHTS NOT RESPECTED IN SCHOOL AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

2) FORCING EVENING STUDY TIME

"I do not want after-school classes, but have to attend it." (Anonym)

"Changing day time or evening study time and break time without any respect for our opinions" (Anonym)

"In the survey about after-school classes of playing recorder and traditional percussion music, we can express our likes and dislikes as marking circles or x, but teachers change our markings all into circles."
(Age 11, girl)

"Changing evening study time and break time without asking us" (Age 14, boy)

3) CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN A DECISION-MAKING PROCESS ON MATTERS SUCH AS PICNIC

"When going on a picnic to a place different from our opinion"(Age 14, boy)

"Deciding on a picnic as teachers like" (Age 14, boy)



Figure 8 A picture describing a teacher forcing students to sign the consent form for evening study time (Anonym)

"You must sign it without questions!"
"Teacher, what should I do if I do not want to?"

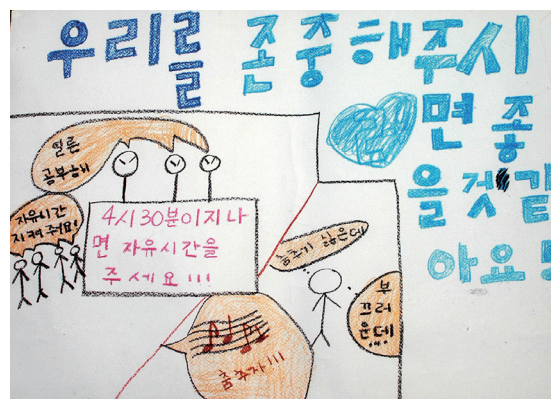


Figure 9 A poster expressing wishes to be respected when deciding free time and a timetable (Age 10, girl)

"It will be nice if you can respect us!"
"Please give us free time after 4:30 p.m."

1-2. RESPECT FOR CHILD'S OPINION AT HOME

RIGHTS NOT RESPECTED AT HOME AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

1) CASES OF NOT BEING ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

"When adults think and decide as they like" (Anonym)

"When telling me we have to move as I do not want to part with my friends" (Age 11, girl)

"Forcing me to keep doing home-study materials" (Age 11, girl)

"My parents force me to attend after-school classes" (Age 13, girl)

"Breaking promises with no good reason" (Age 11, boy)



"Mom, please let me stop
Gumon (home-study materials)."
"No way! You have to do it hard!!!"

Figure 10 A picture describing a mother forcing home-study materials (Age12, girl)

2) DISREGARD FOR CHILDREN'S DESIRE

"When my grandmother makes me have my hair cut although I want to grow my hair" (Age 11, girl)

"I can't watch TV when I want" (Age 13, girl)

"No right I can't watch TV more than 3 hours" (Age 12, girl)

"No right I can't watch TV enough" (Age 11, girl)

"I can't do my computer as I like" (Age 10, boy)

"My mom shouts at me to study right now when I don't want. So I am forced to study...everyday...but can't I study when I am willing to do?... When I am forced to study, I cannot concentrate on what I am supposed to learn and also when I have to solve problems. I can't solve problems well because my brain becomes stuck." (Age 10, girl)

"No!"
"Why!"



Figure 11 A picture describing an adult who ignores the request of a child in the decision making process related with the child (Anonym)



2. PLAY AND LEISURE, AND THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

[Article 31] Play and Leisure

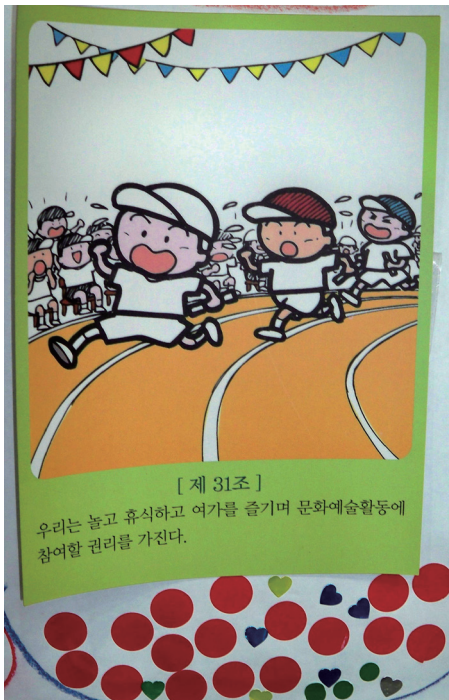
1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

[Article 29] The aims of education

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.



Children expressed that they could not enjoy play and leisure in various aspects. As you can see in the picture on left side, those who participated in the program, strongly claimed the need and the importance of play and leisure by selecting the article related with play and leisure(article 31) as 'the right that I need the most'.



Time for sleep and rest for children were not guaranteed in the overriding atmosphere of forcing them to study, and a leisure time was also very rare for most children. Regarding a timetable, minor subjects such as arts were being replaced by major subjects for university entrance exams. This trend seems to be more evident as the child moves up to a higher grade.

Also, the children appealed that they lacked space for leisure and things to play with. Playground is originally for children, but in many cases it has been degenerated as a harmful environment, which turned into a smoking place for older children or adults. Occasionally, the children expressed that they fear the playground due to the violence or threat by older children. Also, in some districts, doing a computer game in PC room is the only thing for many children to do for play, due to little space and rare cultural benefits available.

Figure 12 Play and leisure ranked No.1 as the right children like the most
"What is the right that I need the most right now?"

2-1. LACK OF TIME FOR PLAY AND LEISURE

PLAY AND LEISURE NOT RESPECTED AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

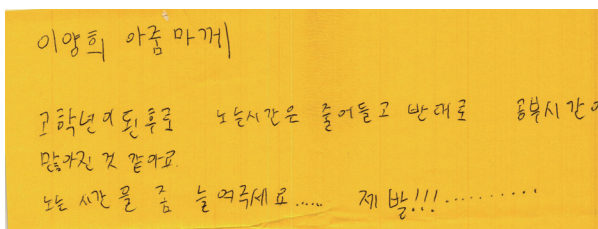
1) LACK OF TIME FROM THE EXCESSIVE STUDY

"I have no time to run on the playground." (Anonym)

"Force me to study during free time" (Anonym)

"My peer, younger or older friends are preoccupied with study, and have not enjoyed pastime." (Age 12, girl)

"I have to study in school from Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday through Saturday, and it is so hard to study until Sunday although it is a day off." (Age 11, boy)



"Dear Mrs. Lee, Yanghee, As I became an upper grader, time to play has reduced, while I have to study so much. Please let me have more time for play!"

Figure 13 A message appealing for more leisure time (Anonym)

"Extend break time... please!!!" (Anonym)

"seem to have no enough time for play because of study." (Age 11, girl)

"I should stay in school until 9 p.m." (Age 13, boy)

"I need to get some sleep. I kind of get first in class, and so my mom makes me study too much. I need to get some sleep because I go to bed at midnight." (Age 11, girl)

"Enforcing me to study without a sleep" (Age 14, boy)

"I had three hours of sleep. I sleep from 2 a.m. until 5 a.m. I had two hours of study on my own, cleaned up myself, and go to school for classes from 9 a.m until 5 p.m. Coming back home from school, I clean up myself, have a meal, study by myself from 6 p.m to 9 p.m, get a private lesson from 9 p.m to 11 p.m, and study on my own again from 11 p.m to 2 p.m, and get some sleep for nearly 3 hours..." (Age 14, boy)

"Parents enforcing me to keep studying when I want some rest being tired" (Age 15, boy)



"Right to play, right to rest(not to study excessively), right to be respected"

"My parents compel me to keep studying when I want to rest because I am too tired" (Age 15, boy)

"I wake up at 7:40 am, study at school, get afterschool sessions, have evening self-study, and then, back home, get personal tutoring. When these are all finished, it's about 11:10pm. I can go to bed around midnight" (Age 14, boy)

"In Korea, it is more stressful to study than in Thailand. Maybe two times, three times harder..." (Age 14, boy)

Figure 14 Children's work expressing their inability to play due to excessive study (Anonym)

PLAY AND LEISURE NOT RESPECTED AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

2) DISAPPEARING BREAK TIME

"Please make efforts on guaranteeing enough break time. Our classmates complain about starting a class before a regular break time ends." (Age 10, girl)

"We take a 40-minute class and we have a break time of the first class with 10 minutes more, but teachers just cut it. " (Age 11, girl)

"We have only 50 minutes of lunch time. So we have a meal, brush our teeth, and the lunch time ends even before finishing clean-up....lunch time is so short that we can't do our hobby or enjoy our play enough. It is so boring to spend day by day like this as we have no spare time put aside" (Age 11, girl)

"Shouting that it's not yet break time, but it is." (Age 11, girl)

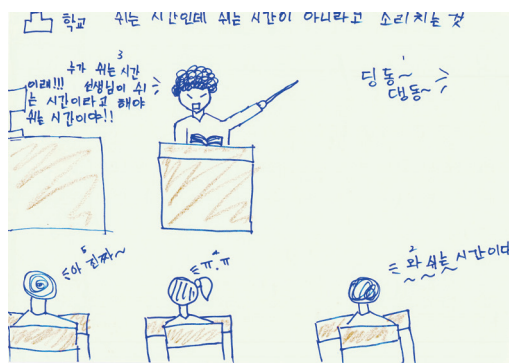
"It is break time, but they say no" (Age 11, girl)

"when taking down a lecture during the break" (Age 12, girl)

"Teacher lecturing math during the break, but I want to rest." (Age 11, girl)

"Forced to study in the middle of playing... have no spare time for break... and unwillingly attend after-school class..." (Anonym)

"Break time is too short to play in a school yard. In China, students even play soccer during break time." (Anonym)



"Who says it's break time? Break time is only when I say so! – Teacher yelling at us that it is not break time when it is"

Figure 15 A picture describing a teacher who continues lecturing after a session ends (Anonym)



*"A new right of the child:
Let's keep the break time"*

Figure 16 A poster appealing to keep break time (Age 10, boy)

2-2. CURRICULUM HEAVILY CONCENTRATED ON UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM

THE AIMS OF EDUCATION NOT RESPECTED AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

CONTINUOUSLY CHANGING TIMETABLE

"..teach us math mainly... arts and PE are replaced by math..

Actually, we have classes of (arts and PE), but only after an exam period or after skipping too many of them. Korean, math, sociology, science, and English are more important than arts and PE" (Age 12, girl)

"Arts and PE are taken away." (Age 14, boy)

"Break time is not observed, and place for PE keeps changing. Also timetable changes as teachers like." (Age 11, girl)

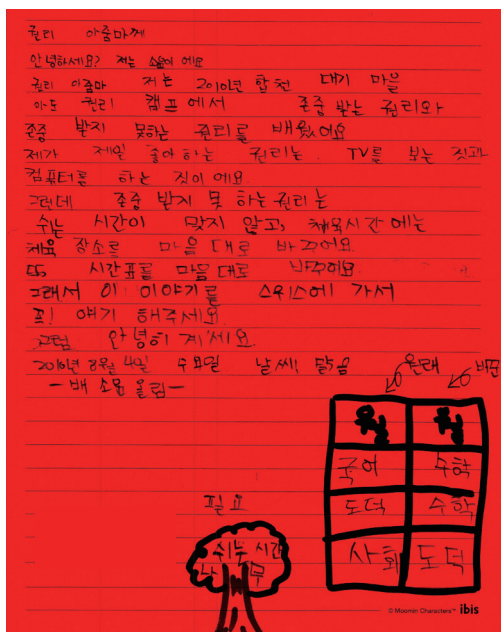
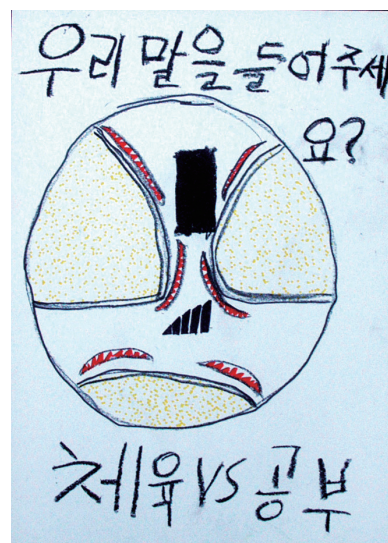


Figure 17 A letter making an objection about other subjects being changed to math class (Age 11, girl)

"What is the right not respected? Place for PE class is often changed and timetable is changed at teachers' will. So, please tell people in the UN for me."

*"Please listen to us?
PE vs. Study"*

Figure 18 A poster appealing that PE not be changed to self-study (Age 11, boy)



2-3. PLAY AND LEISURE ENVIRONMENT

NEED FOR PLAY AND LEISURE ENVIRONMENT AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

"No places to play with...other than school. No playgrounds." (Age 11, boy)

"(Any playground for you?) No. (There are) shelters for elderly people though." (Age 11, girl)

"Cultural facilities for children's rights seem to be in short supply. Please build some parks where we can rest. And one more change I want to see. The schoolyard is dirty because high school students play soccer in our schoolyard and eat take-out chickens and threw the waste away. (Age 10, girl)

"In Chang-Nyeong, there are so many delinquents that most of older folks smoke in the playground. I can't play in the playground because of tobacco odor." (Age 11, boy)



Figure 19 Play and leisure environment the child wishes to have
"Youth Cultural Center" "Hap-Cheon Cultural Center for Children"
(Group work)

"Lack in scientific station, PE facilities" (Age 11, boy)

"I just stay at home all day weekend unless I do a computer. No friends to play with in the countryside. Other villages are all far away." (Age 11, girl)

"I moved to Seoul when I started the first grade.... Seoul is more convenient. Friends live nearby... many places to play in...it is nice and more comfortable." (Age 12, girl)

3. NON-DISCRIMINATION

[Article 2] Non - discrimination

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

It is clearly stated that children should be protected against any kind of discrimination. However, children living in ROK are suffering from discrimination based on gender, physical characteristics, race and social origin and so on.



"We should not be discriminated in any case. Regardless of who our parents are, what race we belong to, which religion we have, what language we speak, whether we are rich or poor, and whether we have disabilities or not, we should be able to enjoy equal rights."

Figure 20 A picture describing the right not to be discriminated which is the article 2 of CRC (Anonym)

3-1. GENDER DISCRIMINATION

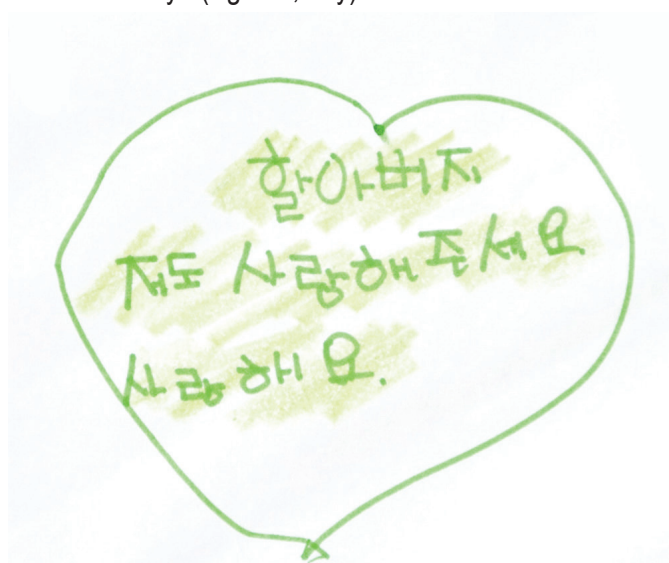
Girls talked about gender discrimination in cases where they are wholly responsible for housework or other male siblings take priority in the communication or selection of the things. This kind of attitudes is also shown in a group like schools or living facilities for the child. It appears that teachers make girls do the meal serving related things in school. The children, who have participated in this report, expressed complaints about the guidelines following stereotype gender roles, as elaborated below.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

"I do the dishes, and charge domestic chores, but my older brother is excused." (Age 16, girl)

"It is my older brother's fault, but only I am scolded for it." (Anonym)

"Only girls are on duty for school meals... teachers make girls do it on duty because they think girls serve more cleanly." (Age 12, boy)



"Grandpa, please love me also. I love you."

Figure 21 A message from a granddaughter to her grandfather who discriminates her because she is a girl (Age 10, girl)

"Male and female: Let's not discriminate."



Figure 22 A poster saying no gender discrimination (Anonym)

3-2. DISCRIMINATION BY ACADEMIC GRADE

The discrimination which the children experience most is the one by academic grade. The children expressed that they get discriminative treatments from their teachers in the forms of favoritism, ignorance, comparison according to their grades. It is reported that teachers make distinctions on the number of presentations during the class and attention level, based on children's different learning abilities represented by the test results and grades.

DISCRIMINATION BY ACADEMIC GRADE AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

"Teachers play favorites and make distinctions between the poor and good students. Teacher only likes students who got good grade at school." (Anonym)

"discriminate me as I have a poor grade"(Anonym) "assign seats based on grades." (Age 15, girl)

"I want to make a presentation, but ignores me and not let me do it because I make poor grades" (Age 15, girl)

3-3. DISCRIMINATION BY SOCIAL ORIGIN

It is also reported that the child from multicultural family, the ones living in the facilities who are not able to live with their parents, and also children who are refugees or from North Korean defectors experience discrimination in their daily lives.

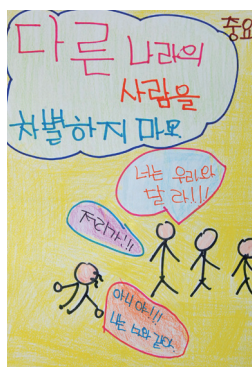
DISCRIMINATION BY SOCIAL ORIGIN AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

"Why call me New Settler (Sae-teo-min)³?" (Age 11, girl)

"They told me that I am different from them...at that time, when I was very small, my accent was so different that other kids always made fun of me telling me to go away as I am a different person from them...(In school) teachers too often ask us to raise hand if one is from a multi-cultural family. Then, I am the only one to raise my hand. And the classmates whisper among themselves about my family...blur..blur...." (Age 11, girl)

"I'm 'multicultural.' That's why I got teased." (Age 11, girl)

"Right not to be discriminated: In the English camp, people treated students from other elementary schools kindly, while they discriminated us."



"Don't discriminate people from other countries"

"You are different from us! Go away!" "No, I am like you."

Figure 23 A poster saying no discrimination against those who have different skin colors and speak different languages (Anonym)

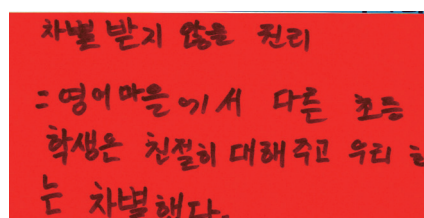


Figure 24 Discrimination experienced by a child who lives in a facility when the child was participating in the camp (Anonym)

³ A new term adopted in ROK to refer to North Koreans who have been admitted into ROK, which has been suggested to be used instead of the term "defector" or "escapee"

"I got teased because my skin colour is darker than theirs. At first I almost fought but now I just accept it. When I walk on the street, people talk about my skin colour...mostly old women do..." (Age 14, boy)

"(Because of the pork) sometimes I just skip meals...I hardly have a meal on Wednesday and Friday since meals containing pork are served...Sometimes I eat only rice because I'm too hungry." (Age 14, boy from the Muslim family)

3-4. DISCRIMINATION BY PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Among the children, there are those who have experienced discrimination on the ground of or been teased about physical characteristics, appearances, disabilities or different physical development condition. This kind of discrimination is mainly from the children of the same age, rather than from the adults, and the details are as follows

DISCRIMINATION BY PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

"I don't like getting teased about my dark complexion." (Age 11, girl)

"Getting teased about my different development condition" (Age 11, girl)

"Getting teased as I am left-handed" (Age 13, girl)

다른 친구와 신체적으로 비교할 때! (Age 11, girl)

"When I am compared with my friends about my body!"



"Discrimination against the people with disabilities: I am so sad"

"Look at him! He is a disabled person. Ha Ha Ha..."

Figure25 A poster saying no discrimination for the disabled (Anonym)

3-5. DISCRIMINATION BY AGE

The children in ROK have reported that they were ignored by adults just because they are young. Adults make decisions in school or at home as they like, and they take it for granted that the children follow the decision with an attitude, 'you are too young to do'.

DISCRIMINATION BY AGE AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

어른들 얘기니까 난 배려받고 어리다고 무시할 때

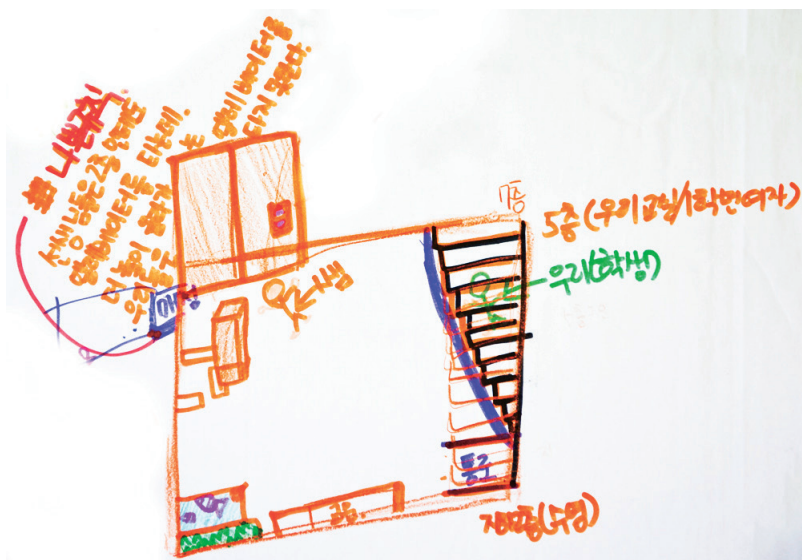
"When they ignore me by saying that I should stay out of it because it's adults' talk" (Age 11, girl)

"Adults can do, but I can't do" (Anonym)

"Parents ignoring me that I am too young" (Age 11, girl)

"Ignoring me that I am too young when I do something" (Anonym)

"Treating me without sincerity when buying some products in a store because I am a little boy." (Age 15, boy)



"It will be nice if we students can also use the elevator. Teachers going to the 2nd floor use the elevator, while students going to high floors can't. If not, it will be nice if teachers also use the stairs so that they can be friendlier with students."

Figure 26 A picture expressing that it is discrimination that only schoolteachers can use in-school elevator (Age 13, girl)

"People look down on me because I was pregnant in my teens. They said how dare you attempt to raise a baby. 'Without a husband', 'at your age'....those are words that I have heard most frequently...which is the hardest thing for me." (Age 17, girl)

4. PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

[Article 19] The right of the child to protection from violence and abuse

1. States Parties take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

The violence to the child living in ROK can be categorized as the ones inflicted by adults (schoolteacher, parents) and the ones by other children (classmates, older students).

4-1. VIOLENCE BY THE ADULTS

It appears that adults use violence in the cases when the child receives poor test results, show low ability for assignment, miss their homework, and do not follow regulations or teaching methods. Forms of violence are classified as physical violence using tools or body, verbal violence such as swearing or insulting words, punishments such as hand lifting or push-ups, and compulsory execution of regulations

VIOLENCE BY THE ADULTS AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

1) VIOLENCE BY PARENTS AND OTHER ADULTS

"There are many friends or parents to speak directly about drawbacks, and even to make fun of them....and please adults need to stop calling us with annoying words such as Ya, Neo." (Age 12, girl)



"I think children like us need to be protected because there are some children who get hit or assaulted by their own parents. Those children particularly need protection." (Age 11, girl)

"No one should touch my body." (Age 10, girl)

*"Even the parents should take responsibilities:
Parents cannot hurt the child (Article 19)."*

Figure 27 A picture expressing that parents should not use violence even to their own children (Age 11, girl)

VIOLENCE BY ADULTS AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

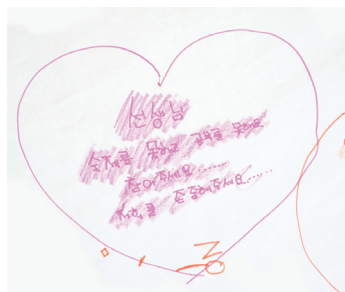
2) VIOLENCE BY TEACHERS

- Degrading language and punishment

"After-school teachers speak ill of students and punish them severely. So I don't want them to swear, and to punish ruthlessly. Please shrink my head." (Age 11, girl)

"There are some teachers who swear." (Age 12, girl)

"would be nice to stop putting it crudely if possible, please.... quit school...speaking bluntly as if I were dregs of society" (Age 16, girl)



"Dear Teacher, Even if we are not good with our homework and are not good at studying, please bear with us. Please show respect for us."

Figure 28 Letters appealing to stop punishment (Age 11, girl)

- Physical punishment

"I don't want adults to hit us. I am a bit poor at music. So a teacher from a musical concert group hit me with a baton, which hurt me so much"(Anonym)

"I don't want to be hit in the palms at school if I make a mistake." (Age 11, girl)

"In a fourth grade, I was often hit for not doing my homework. In a fifth grade, my teacher told me to go back home throwing my schoolbag away because I often didn't do my homework.." (Age 12, boy)

"Punishment is prohibited, but teachers hit us. Hitting us on the palms or hitting us in the butt with this large iron rod." (Age 13, girl)

- Application of strict rules

"As my hair is long, my teacher himself cuts my hair." (Age 14, boy)

"My teacher gets angry, when making sound. We should walk regularly in the corridor. We are scolded for running or arm-in-arm with a friend in the corridor.." (Age 12, boy)

*"Come on, it's summer...Isn't this too much?"
p.s. This is my uniform which was bought by me*

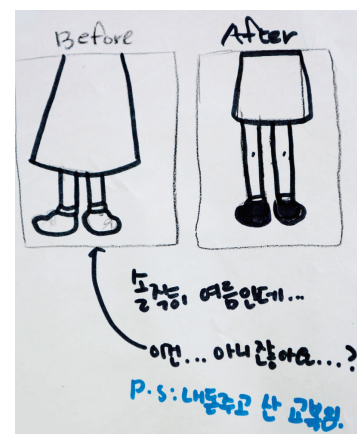


Figure 29 A picture expressing a wish for no restrictions on skirt length (Age 16, girl)

4-2. VIOLENCE BY CHILDREN

It was revealed that the violence by the peer, not by adults, experienced by some children who participated in this report is also serious. The violence by other children occurs mainly inside school, and the child who causes violence can be classified into the peer group children and superior students. Outcast and violence by the peer were reported by the most of the children who participated in this report, and the violence from the superior students is manifested remarkably in rural areas or child-care facilities.

VIOLENCE BY PEER CHILDREN AS EXPRESSED

1) VIOLENCE BY PEER CHILDREN

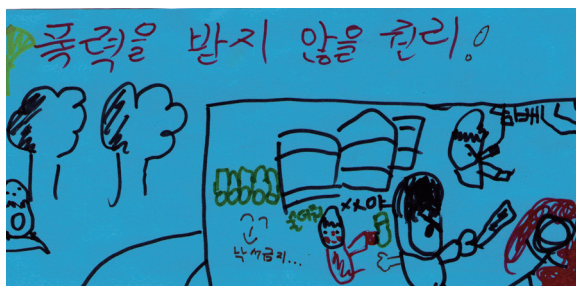
"Recently, friends hit one another, and speak ill of others. I hurt myself in hitting others for no reason... poor players in soccer or other events also should take part in, but they can't as they are harassed for their poor game results." (Age 11, girl)

"There are some friends left out as outcasts. I hope there won't be any friends left out." (Age 11, boy)

"I am alienated from some classmates in the class. They say to me "Don't do it" when I want to do something. I was treated as an outcast before as well in another school where I was alienated almost every day. Here, it happens only once in a while." (Age 11, girl)

"In the middle school, and in the elementary school... I was hit... They took pictures of me after stripping my trousers off... They took pictures of even my penis and all... Sometimes, they made other friends who have disabilities make strange sounds in the closed toilet." (Age 15, boy)

"(In the toilet) they gathered together and took pictures with a camera under the penis." (Age 14, boy)



"The right to be free from violence"

Figure 30 A picture expressing that the child has a right to be free from violence (Anonym)

2) VIOLENCE BY OLDER CHILDREN

"Sometimes, older delinquents hit us for no reason. Please stop them from hitting us just because they are annoyed! Strong older students take the money from weak younger students." (Age 11, boy)

"Sometimes, older students hit us in school. I don't know how to do in that case. They would hit us again if I tell them not to do because they are too strong." (Age 10, boy)

"I don't like young people under age 15 to smoke. I cannot stand the sight of their smoking, and seem to be harmed." (Age 11, boy)

5. THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY



"Parents, do listen!"

Figure 31 A picture saying that all parents in ROK should listen to what children have to say (Group work)

[Article 16] Rights to Privacy

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.

The children living in Korea express that they are not respected mainly by parents at home and teachers in school. The privacy of the children which is not respected can be categorized into the following three areas.

5-1. CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE CONTENTS CONTAINING CHILDREN'S DAILY LIFE

Like adults, children also have their own personal life. It is natural that children do not want to open this private area even to parents. But, it was confirmed that many parents check mobile phone or diary concerning children's privacy, and in many cases, schoolteachers check the diary of their students, and at home, parents do the same checking either secretly or by force. And the children living in ROK expressed their discomfort about their parents and schoolteachers showing too much attention to their privacy.

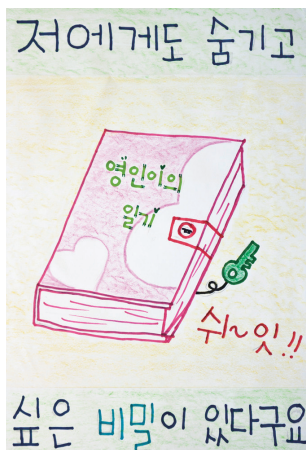
UNPROTECTED PRIVACY AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE CONTENTS ON THE CHILDREN'S DIARY LIFE

- Diary

"My mom....Reading my diary when I am asleep, and forcing me to reveal my privacy..." (Age 15, girl)

"Without my permission, my diary is read openly." (Age 12, girl)



"Diary of Young In: Hush! I also have some secrets that I want to keep to myself."

Figure 32 Poster expressing the need for protection of privacy (Age 11, girl)

- Mobile Phone

"I can't talk on the phone as I like." (Age 16, girl)

"My mobile phone being taken away on the ground that there is the possibility to be addicted to using it" (Age 14, boy)

"My mobile phone being taken away" (Age 14, boy)

"I have to submit my mobile phone in school, but I don't want to do...." (Anonym)

"I got hit if I delete my messages." (Age 13, girl)

"Everyday, my mom checks my messages, and it's totally unprotected." (Age 14, boy)

- Excessive attention

"There are many parents and teachers who intervene our privacies.... when they show me excessive attention and make me to tell what I do not want..." (Age 11, girl)

"I feel irritated for excessive intervention at home." (Age 11, girl)

"My parents keep asking me what happened to me in school when I come back home." (Age 14, boy)

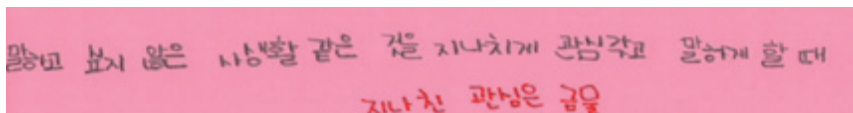


Figure 33 Appeal from a child, "No excessive attention" (Anonym)

*"No excessive attention please"
"they show too much attention and ask me to speak about my private life"*

5-2. THE GUARANTEE OF INDIVIDUAL SPACES OF THE CHILD

Another case of some children of ROK saying that their privacy is not protected is that they have no guaranteed individual space for themselves. The children living in welfare facilities have no individual space as they lead communal living. Therefore, they have constraints in changing the clothes, keeping the diary, or having private communications (including being scolding) with facility teachers. Moreover, it was found out that some parents force the child to let the door of child's room open or remove it in order to control the lives of the child.

UNPROTECTED PRIVACY AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

"I have a room.. which is open.. I can see my sister changing her clothes." (Age 14, boy)

"keep opening a door when I am cleaning myself up...." (Age 13, girl)

"I do not have my own room. My mom got rid of it. My room was connected to mom's room, which has been removed by mom for now.... My computer is in my mom's room, and school supplies are also in there."

(Age 14, boy)



"Protect my privacy"

*Figure 34 Picture appealing for child's privacy protection
(Group work)*

5-3. DIFFICULTIES OF INDIVIDUAL OWNERSHIP

It was not easy for the child living in public facilities to own personal belongings compared to the children in other groups. Some children say that they could not wear what they want because they have to share the clothes together, and also could not spend as they like although they received some pocket money.

UNPROTECTED PRIVACY AS EXPRESSED BY CHILDREN

Difficulties of individual ownership

"I hate not spending our pocket money as we like." (Age 11, boy)

"No right I can do as I like (baseball I got as a present being kept in guidance teacher's locker)." (Age 11, boy)



*"Right not to go out?
Right only to study?
Right not to wear?"*

Figure 35 Picture appealing for child's privacy protection (Anonym)



CHILDREN'S VOICE

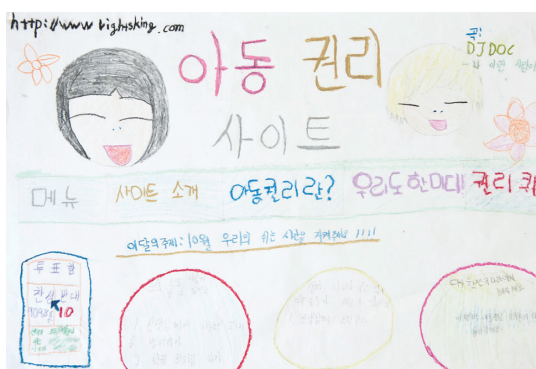
to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
by Children of Republic of Korea



IV. WISHES OF CHILDREN

The children themselves came up with solutions to the rights that are not well respected in ROK, which are presented below.

1. EFFORTS TO RAISE AWARENESS ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



"We need the web site for Child Rights: What Are the Rights of the Child? I Have a Say! Rights Quiz"

Figure 36 Children's proposal to run a child rights homepage for child rights advocacy (Group work)

The survey results show that 31.9% of the children have not heard of the rights, and 53.4% have never heard of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child(CRC). Article 42 of the CRC stipulates that the state party has an obligation to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike. Therefore, the government of ROK has responsibility and obligation to act on it, by making more efforts to widely disseminate the CRC through media, child organizations, and schools. The children suggested following alternatives to this end.

1) CREATING AND RUNNING A CHILD RIGHTS WEBSITE

Children proposed an idea of creating and running a child rights homepage in order to widely disseminate information about child rights and encourage their implementation. Children hope that such a homepage will be used as a space not only to get information about child rights, but also to facilitate better understanding on these rights and advocacy from child's perspectives.

2) RIGHTS EDUCATION

"Before, friends gave me a hard time because I am from a multicultural family. Now, I feel good to get this kind of education. But, this is not enough. Other children also need to be educated and learn this. Even if we get this education, if others don't know, it doesn't help much." (Age 11, girl)

This child talked about her own experience of going through difficulties due to prejudice of her friends, and then suggested the necessity of rights education for all children. She emphasized that change in the awareness of the children at large is necessary, and a faster and more effective way to promote respect for multiculturalism and diversity overcoming discrimination.

3) CAMPAIGN AND PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES

“Launch a campaign by a child rights protection organization led by students.”

“Post articles on the Internet about invasion of privacy experienced by children, in order to raise awareness on the right to privacy.”

“Create an online café about respect for privacy.”

“Produce public campaign advertisement about respect for privacy of children.”

“Inform people to respect rights anywhere at homes, schools, and workplaces, teaching them what rights are.”



“Please respect our privacy.”

Figure 37 Suggested idea of producing and broadcasting public campaign advertisement about respect for child right (Group work)

2. CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE OF ADULTS DEALING WITH CHILDREN

It has been revealed that children of ROK have minimal chances of expressing their opinions at home and school. Even when they can, their opinions are often met with negative responses,

“No self-justification of adults: Please consider my point of view.”

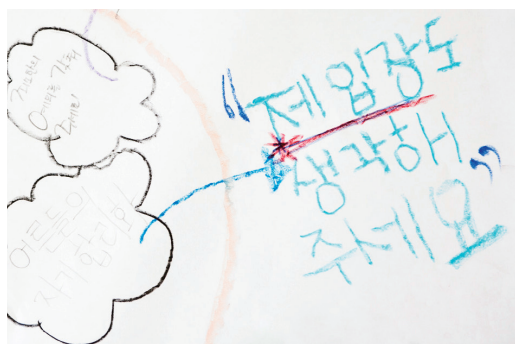


Figure 38 Children's expression saying they want to be understood (Group work)

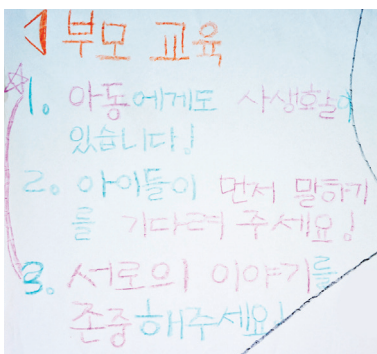
which makes children even less positive about expressing what they think. Regarding having dialogues with adults such as parents and teachers, many children said “What for?” “Doesn’t help” “I will be scolded if I tell them” “No use... We avoid each other, just ignore. I just need to put up with it for another year until I graduate”. It can be learned that many children regard talking to adults (mainly teachers and parents) about themselves meaningless, which affects the children to keep avoiding them by ignoring them, or even to make extreme decisions like running away from home or quitting school, as alternative solutions. However, children made efforts to find more fundamental solutions and here are their suggestions.

1) ROLE PLAY

"Children and adults can change their roles and live in a society without freedom. How about adults becoming one-day middle school students?" (Age 15, girl)

2) EDUCATION FOR PARENTS

"We hope that our parents 'sympathize' with us." (Age 12, girls)



*"Education for parents –
1. Children also have privacy.
2. Please wait for a child to speak first.
3. Please show mutual respect!"*

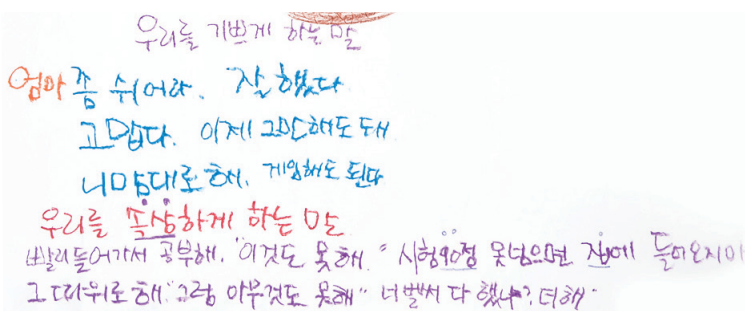
Figure 39 Children's appeal for parents to listen to their children through education for parents (Group work)

3) PSYCHOTHERAPY

"I hope adults stop justifying themselves and try to genuinely understand children. Parents who want to get vicarious satisfaction from their children... (to get rid of it) need to see a therapist. I wish both such adults and their children receive psychotherapy, so that they can be more free from it." (Age 15, girl)

4) THE USE OF POSITIVE LANGUAGE

"I don't think my family is multicultural. It's not necessary, because we are the same people, just speaking a bit differently." (Age 11, girl)



*"Words that make us happy: Take rest, Well done, Thank you, You don't have to do it, Do it as you like, You can play games.
Words that make us sad: Go quickly and study, Why can't you do this, Don't think about coming home if you don't do well in the exam, If you continue like that, you will be of no use, Already finished? Do it more!"*

Figure 40 "Please say things that can make us happy!" (Group work)

5) ALTERNATIVE METHODS

“What about keeping score and treat someone with good behaviors or give additional points?”
(Anonym)

“I wish I can get more supplementary assistance than others.” (Age 15, girl)

3. DRAWING UP STRICT LAWS AND MECHANISMS & STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY FACILITIES

“Please ban smoking by children under 18 years old.” (Anonym)

“Please make more protection facilities where we can go when bad folks or adults approach us to do bad things.” (Age 12, boy)

“It will be good if teachers are prohibited from hitting or punishing children.” (Age 11, boy)

“We will change the laws so that children and adults will be treated more or less equal. The only difference is that children need protection because they are weak.” (Group work)

“Enact law on the respect of privacy (with a reporting system which can fine people who violate the law).” (Anonym)

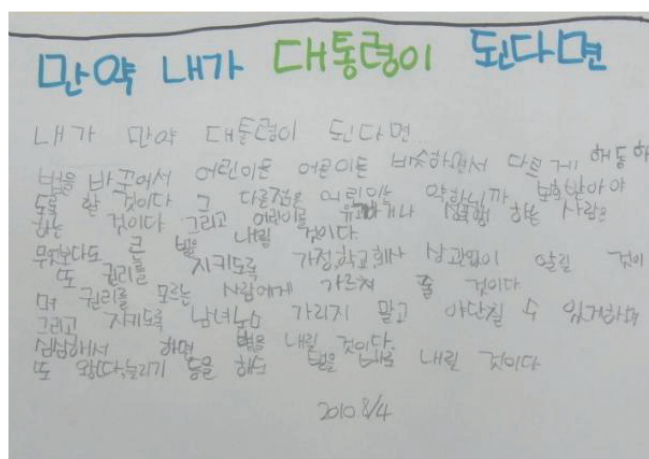


Figure 41 Presentation on legal alternatives for preventing violence against children (Age 11, girl)
“If I become President...”

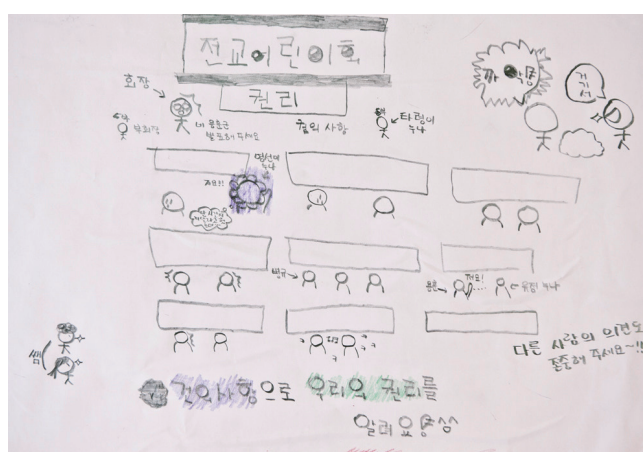


Figure 42 A drawing which encourages children's participation through student assembly at school (Group work)

“Let our rights be known by making suggestions at children's assembly!”

4. WHAT TO DO WHEN THE RIGHTS ARE NOT BEING RESPECTED

1) INCREASE CHANCES TO EXPRESS OPINIONS THROUGH CLASS ASSEMBLY

“Suggestions can be made at class assembly and break time should be kept” (Anonym)

2) DIVERSIFY COMMUNICATION METHODS

“Talk to teachers by writing letters or making phone calls.”

“Write a letter asking them to knock on the door.”

“Speak with a counseling teacher or a principal.”

“If discrimination is a serious case, you can consult the National Human Rights Commission. If you can't go to see them yourself, you can get information on the Internet.”

“We must inform the UN about it.” (Age 10, boy)

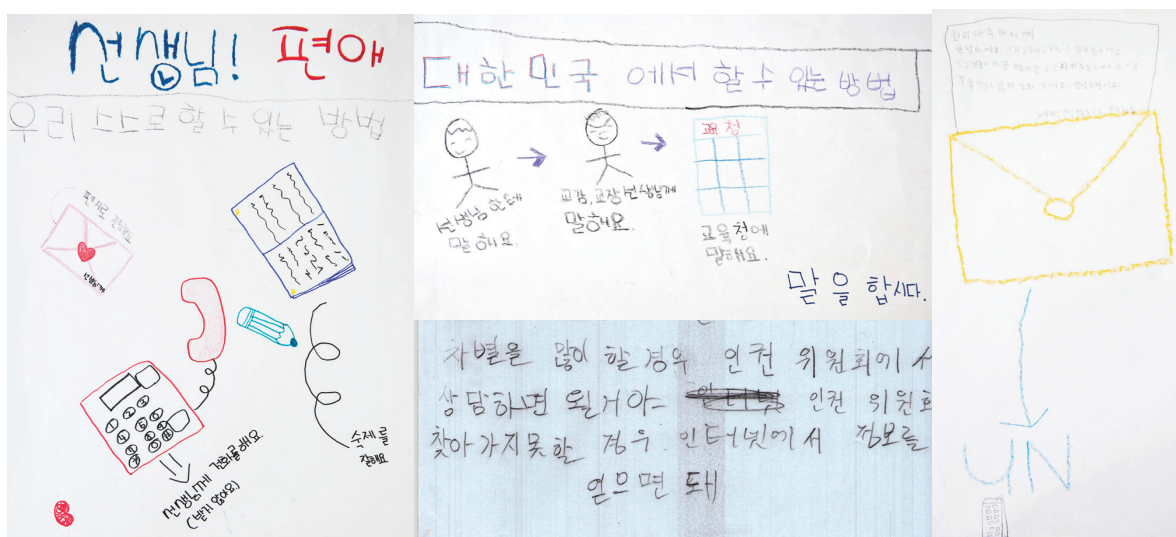


Figure 43 Various communication channels that can be used when the rights are not respected (Group work)

“Teacher! Do not play favorites! : Writing a letter or making a phone call to a teacher, consulting the National Human Rights Commission, sending a letter to the UN.”



CHILDREN'S VOICE

to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
by Children of Republic of Korea





V. CONCLUSION


We have heard from 671 children of ROK in order to find out how they perceive the rights of the child and what rights are being violated. The results show that children's right to survival is fairly well respected in ROK. However, it was revealed that the right to participation and the right to development are not well respected while the right to protection is also severely violated.

First, many children of ROK are not familiar with the concepts of the rights and do not fully understand that they are the rights-holders. About half of the entire respondents said they have not heard of the CRC, and more than one thirds responded that they do not know what rights are. But, it is not because children themselves lack the interests or ability to learn their own rights. Rather, it is because the rights education system suitable for each age level is insufficient. Actually, children enthusiastically emphasized the necessity of rights education for awareness-raising and on realization of the rights of the child, making concrete suggestions like a child rights homepage and the universal rights education for all adults including teachers and parents.

Second, it has been revealed that children's right to participation is not properly respected in ROK. Children pointed out the fact that their opinions are not respected at school and home as the worst situation where their right is violated. This can be attributed to the general attitude of many adults who ignore children's opinions and believe that a child must unconditionally obey adult's orders.

Third, the extent to which children's right to development is violated was of serious concern. Children's right to leisure and rest, and the right to get appropriate education for balanced development of their mental and physical abilities were not being guaranteed. Lack of rest due to excessive study load was a very serious problem, as in the case of a 14-year-old child getting only 3 hours' sleep per day. This violates child's right to have adequate sleep, which is directly related with the right to survival.

Many children we met during the research were under excessive stress from being forced to study in fierce competition, keeping running as adults want them to. Their everyday lives of silently shouting "I want to play. But, I can't!" is a slice of the sad reality of ROK society with distorted values of pursuing success, university prestige, and economic affluence only. Such social atmosphere is a huge obstacle for children to enjoy their right



to play and leisure and the right to have opportunities to express their opinions and to be heard.

Fourth, it was also often pointed out that children's right to protection is not well respected. The kind of discrimination which the children who expressed their opinions in this report mentioned the most was discrimination at school on the basis of their school grades, in addition to more traditional reasons such as gender or age. This is linked with the issue of fierce competition amid excessive study atmosphere as mentioned above. Also, discrimination based on the physical traits and ethnic origins was noticeable, which is the negative effect of ROK society turning into a multicultural society. Regarding violence and abuse, children raised their voices criticizing excessive regulations at school and corporal punishment on the ground of poor grades. Also, the issues of outcast and violence among the peer students were quite serious. It is noteworthy that children pointed out the issue of dissemination of harmful videos via the Internet as a serious problem. Also, the problem of children's privacy not protected was raised.

The children who took part in the activities of this report including the education program, group meeting, and in-depth interview, could learn one very important element. That is the fact that the children themselves are the main agents of their rights. Throughout the entire processes, children learned their own right, expressed their opinions about these rights, and had opportunities to share their experiences with us. Now, it is our sincere hope that the opinions and experiences of the children contained in this report will be used as valuable data in understanding the current address of the rights of the child in ROK, and furthermore, in making continued endeavors to improve the situation of the children.



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Save the Children US, Save the Children UK, Save the Children Sweden, and Save the Children Canada began working in Korea since 1953 to assist the victims of the Korean War., and became the seed for Save the Children Korea.

As a member of the world's largest independent organization for children making a difference to children's lives in over 120 countries, Save the Children Korea works to improve children's lives by protecting their rights to food, shelter, health care, education and freedom from violence, abuse and exploitation.



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