



SHAPING A COUNTRY'S FUTURE

With Children and Young People

NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Involving Children and Young People in their Development

September 2002

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SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND

The 2002 UN General Assembly Special Session on Children concluded with a commitment by world leaders and governments to create a better world for children. The way that they will do this is explained in a document called ‘A World Fit for Children’ which contains:

- A ‘Declaration’ of key principles and objectives
- A global ‘Plan of Action’.

To help them achieve the global plan, the governments of the world agreed to go away from the Special Session on Children and prepare National Plans of Action¹ for children by the end of 2003. These National Plans of Action will explain how each government will work towards the goals and targets of the global plan within their country.

In the global Plan of Action governments agreed that “We must respect [children and adolescents] right to express themselves and to participate in all matters affecting them, in accordance to their age and maturity.” Because the National Plans of Action are being developed to make children’s lives better and to make a reality of their rights, it is vital that children and young people themselves are able to contribute towards the design and development of these National Plans of Action. Children are the key stakeholders whose views need to be heard on the best way to achieve these aims.

But how should governments go about developing a meaningful ‘partnership’ with children and young people? In order to answer this question Save the Children decided to ask children and young people themselves, in various countries around the world, what they thought governments should do. This report is a summary of their views and includes *their* suggestions and ideas about ways in which governments can involve children and young people as they set about developing their National Plans of Action.

How Were Children And Young People’s Views Collected?

This report is based on the results of consultations with children and young people during March and April 2002. Guidelines were prepared which provided information about the development of National Plans of Action and which asked children and young people for their views on ways in which they should be involved. The guidelines suggested that children and young people should approach this question through a review of their previous experience of similar exercises and the lessons that they had learnt during those activities.

¹ National Plans of Action [NPA] are also known as National Action Plans or Programmes of Action for children

Children and young people in 14 countries agreed to be part of these discussions and consultation meetings were organised by Save the Children and other child rights organisations in those countries². As can be seen below, the countries represented in the consultation included a range of countries at different stages of development and in different regions of the world:

- India (Andhra Pradesh)
- Serbia
- Uganda
- The Netherlands
- Sweden
- Uruguay
- Colombia
- Argentina
- Romania
- Nepal
- Peru
- Albania
- Guatemala
- Bangladesh

The results of the individual consultations were written up and have been used as the basis for the preparation of the second section of this report. Input was also received from a very well attended workshop on this issue at the Special Session on Children in May 2002.

Although these consultations cannot claim to be ‘representative’ of the views of all the world’s children, they do contain the views of a group of children and young people with more experience than most of trying to ensure that children’s voices are heard on decisions that directly affect them. The advice they give and the suggestions they make are worthy of serious attention.

Save the Children would like to express its sincere thanks to the more than 4500 children, young people and adults who worked together to carry out this consultation in a very short period of time. It is a tribute to their belief in the importance of this issue that they worked so hard to ensure that the results of this consultation would be available for the delegates at the Special Session on Children.

The Global Plan of Action for Children

The Plan of Action from the Special Session on Children was developed by the governments of the world in negotiations that ran from November 2000 to May 2002. It contains 4 priority ‘areas of action’ where governments will focus their efforts:

- Promoting healthy lives
- Providing quality education
- Protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence
- Combating HIV/AIDS

For each of these priority areas of action the Plan sets out a series of goals, strategies and actions which governments will work to achieve by 2010. These goals and strategies are linked to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals [the MDGs] which are meant to be reached by the year 2015 and which include a number of goals specifically related to children.

² including the Association of Childhood Rights (Argentina), the Integral Education Institute for Health and Development (Guatemala), the Regional Movement of Working Children and Adolescents and IRESIMA (Peru), Profamilia (Colombia), the Consortium of Organisations Working for Child Clubs (Nepal), the Committee of Children’s Rights, the Children’s Network and the National Association of NGOs (Uruguay).

The global Plan of Action also includes other important agreements on issues such as:

- How governments will find the money and other resources for children which will be needed to turn the plan into practical action
- How governments will regularly check on their progress in achieving the goals set out in the global plan of action
- Who needs to be involved in working with governments to deliver on the Plan of Action – including children and young people, parents, families, local governments, parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector, faith groups, the media and international institutions

A ‘child-friendly’ version of the Plan of Action can be found at:

<http://www.savethechildren.net> and is a useful resource – whether for governments who wish to explain the global plan to children or for children and young people who wish to see what it says before they approach their government about it.

Developing National Plans of Action

After the Special Session on Children, governments will return home to begin the process of preparing National Plans of Action for children. These National Plans of Action will be based on the global Plan of Action and should ensure that the priorities and targets agreed at the Special Session are achieved. Governments have been encouraged to develop National Plans of Action that take into account:

- the key issues and priorities for children in their own countries
- relevant cultural, religious and social traditions.

These National Plans of Action will be developed over a period of twelve months so that implementation of the plan can begin as quickly as possible. The goals of the National Plan of Action are also intended to become part of other national policies and programmes, including strategies for getting rid of poverty (e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers).

What is a National Plan of Action?

A National Plan of Action [NPA] is a statement by a government of the key issues for children in that country. It indicates how the government will:

- keep the promises it made at the Special Session on Children and who is responsible for doing so
- adapt the goals of the Special Session to make them relevant to the specific reality and needs of that country
- develop specific national goals and targets which can be measured to see how far they are being achieved
- take practical steps to achieve the goals and targets
- build these goals and targets into other policies, plans and programmes
- find the money and other resources to achieve the goals and targets
- check on the progress it is making towards the goals and targets
- work with other ‘stakeholders’ such as children and NGOs

Once National Plans of Action have been *prepared* they will be *implemented* i.e. put into action. Over time they will need to be *monitored* to ensure that they are achieving what was planned.

Who should be involved in developing National Plans of Action?

If National Plans of Action are to be achieved they will need to involve all those who are working in one way or another for children. So governments should involve all the key ‘stakeholders’ in the development of a National Plan of Action such as:

- CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES
- Parents and local communities
- All government ministries with responsibilities for children (e.g. health, education and social welfare) as well as the Ministry of Finance (which controls the national budget).
- NGOs and other parts of civil society such as women’s organisations and churches
- Businesses
- Professional groups such as doctors and other health care workers, teachers, social workers, etc
- Academics and researchers who are studying children’s issues

Lessons from the 1990s

In 1990 world leaders attended a World Summit for Children in New York which came up with a Plan of Action for the survival, protection and development of children.

Following that meeting, 155 countries developed National Plans of Action (or Programmes of Action) for children, as a way of achieving the goals they had set themselves. However, the success of these National Plans of Action in achieving their goals and creating priority for children varied greatly³. Where they were successful, they helped to produce a national ‘vision’ of what a country wanted for its children, encouraged different parts of government to work together, involved partners outside government and kept up efforts to achieve the goals over a long period of time.

What helped to make National Plans of Action successful? Important reasons included:

- Strong political leadership for children – involving political leaders at different levels (e.g. heads of state; premiers, ministers, governors and mayors) - and that leadership carried on despite changes in government
- Co-ordination of policies and programmes towards children inside government
- Efforts – which might require a lot of time - to develop common agreement on action for children between government and other sectors such as civil society and business
- Turning longer-term goals into more practical actions and steps
- Including action for children in other plans, reforms and strategies

³ see Tadesse, A. *World Summit for Children-Inspired Programmes of Action for Children in the 1990s: a process assessment and lessons learnt* UNICEF Staff Working Papers, New York 2002.

- Linking national goals to goals at lower levels of government (e.g. state, provincial, municipal and district)
- Checking regularly on progress in achieving the goals and targets

Two major gaps in the development of National Plans of Action during most of the 1990s were:

- Even when other groups were encouraged to get involved in their development, children and young people themselves were rarely included. National Plans of Action were seen as being something that was prepared *for* children rather than *with* them.
- National Plans of Action for children were developed separately from implementation plans for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This resulted in wasted efforts and a failure to link the goals in National Plans of Actions to the human rights of children.

Both these problems began to be addressed towards the end of the 1990s as a better understanding of their importance began to emerge.

Section Two: Involving Children and Young People

“We the children are better judges of our problems, issues and solutions. The adults cannot understand our perceptions unless they consult us. Some of our problems do not seem like problems to them. To understand problems and solutions from our point of view, children and young people are to be consulted so that the NPA would address improvement of the child status in a better way”

“Children know their problems better so their voices should be heard so that government can help solve their problems”

“Young people feel that they have the resources to help adults in putting a plan into action”

“We are the present and the tomorrow of our country”

“Better plans are designed by children to address their needs”

“The principle of democracy is being confirmed and promoted through active inclusion of young people”

“Children are many and therefore have varying needs”

In this section of the report we present the main findings from the consultations with children and young people around the world. Under each heading we first present common areas of agreement between the children and young people in different parts of the world and then specific quotations from the individual country reports.

Why should Children and Young People be involved?

Children and young people clearly indicated that they want to be involved in the development of National Plans of Action. The main reasons they gave were:

- They are the people directly targeted by the plans and the most important stakeholders
- They are the people with the most direct experience of the situation of children and they can help governments understand their problems better. Children and young people are the real ‘experts’ on children’s issues!
- Children are not all the same and governments need to hear the views of different groups of children
- They have a right (contained in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) to be consulted on all decisions which affect them
- As can be seen from this consultation, children and young people can – and want to – play a part in supporting implementation of the plan
- They will improve the effectiveness and impact of the plan, making it more successful.
- It helps to build democracy and encourages responsibility among children for their lives, communities and societies
- Young people feel they have valuable resources to bring to the processes – new ideas and a future-oriented perspective.

“Governments need to create an enabling environment for young people to share their views”

“Create and support open and ongoing dialogue between governments and young people”

“There should be a place for young people in politics and the public sphere”

“Governmental bodies and young people need to be organised, which would help in the establishment of communication as a first step in the process of solving the most burning issues”

“[There is a] lack of adequate bodies to co-ordinate this kind of communication, in addition to inaccessibility of governmental officials responsible for youth issues”

“Children should have clubs, committees or organised groups where they can discuss issues affecting them and forward them to government”

“Establish a Children’s Ministry in the Government, with a special representative in the Parliament and other bodies responsible for youth issues and problems”

Children And Young People's Previous Experience Of Consultation

Not Just National Plans of Action

The children and young people involved in the consultations did not want the development of National Plans of Action to be the only way that they worked with government. They felt that their contribution to the development of NPAs could be much greater if it was a part of a more active, wide-ranging engagement and dialogue between government and children. They suggested that:

- Governments should make more efforts to consult with children and young people on their issues and problems – and not just when they are on election campaigns.
- Children and young people need to know more about how governments work and how they can contact the right people – who, where and how?
- Governments should consider how they could listen more carefully to children and young people’s views and set up mechanisms and channels to make this happen. Once they have done that, they should make sure that all children and young people know about these channels of communication.
- Special provision may have to be made for groups of children and young people who find it more difficult to speak to government e.g. children in rural areas, in more remote provinces, children caught up in armed conflict and orphans.
- Governments should consider setting up a place in government with particular responsibility for children and youth such as a Minister for Children or a Children’s Office.
- Governments should note that participation experiences only become positive if they are carried out within a framework of respect for the interests of children and young people, if they are based on real participation and no attempt is made to stigmatise them or manipulate the children and young people involved.

“Politicians see young people as a problem, not as a possible solution”

“Politicians live as they have learned – they did not get any information when they were young and do not think it is their responsibility”

“Time – involvement takes time, so does school, it is difficult for young people to cope and have energy”

“Young people do not have access to sufficient resources in order to be seen (money for journeys, premises, computers, etc)”

“Parents and community leaders should be educated about the rights of children”

“Wars in some parts of the country, fear of sexual abuse and being kidnapped”

“Poverty e.g. children cannot afford to meet fellow children because of distance and other financial barriers”

“All children should have the chance to go to school and gain the skills and opportunities needed to be active participants in decision-making processes”

“Governments should avoid difficult technical language”

Obstacles To Children And Young People’s Involvement

The children and young people involved in the consultations felt that a number of obstacles could block their involvement in the development of National Plans of Action. As well as the lack of regular communication with government discussed above, these obstacles included:

- Negative attitudes by government officials and politicians, including a lack of appreciation for children and young people’s contribution
- Practical difficulties in children and young people keeping involved in working with government such as the demands of school, domestic labour and work, poverty, insecurity, unstable families and poor parental care.
- Adult difficulties in understanding children and young people’s issues and problems
- Children and young people’s lack of education and low awareness of their rights
- Lack of easy-to-find information in ‘child friendly’ language that children and young people can understand. Plus the use of ‘jargon’.
- Failure to follow up on consultations with children, to let them know what happened next and what progress is being made
- Age discrimination and a tendency to underestimate the potential of children and young people
- Lack of contact and exchange between children in different parts of the country and at local, national and international level
- Discrimination against particular groups of children

“Young people should be adequately prepared”

“Young people must maintain their interest and persistence”

“Children need to use the appropriate approach and present practical suggestions”

“Young people and adults have different perspectives and therefore must co-operate and work together. Together we are strong”

“Young people need to have good self-confidence and feel encouraged by the proposals they are submitting”

“We must be involved from the beginning! In the entire process!”

“The government should create real opportunities for young people’s participation: where they can be listened to, respected, where there is no attempt to win them over to one party or another”

“Share more information on [the] governmental process for the development of the NPA”

“Governments should follow through with promises made, especially prior commitments to work with NGOs and young people in the NPA process”

What Do Children And Young People Themselves Have To Do?

The children and young people in the consultations also recognised that, if they wanted to be taken seriously by government, they had to make an effort too. They reflected on the need for children and young people themselves to:

- be responsible, disciplined and well-organised
- show respect for government officials and other people working with them
- respect children who speak other languages or who have different interests, tribal or religious backgrounds, etc
- be properly prepared and use the right approaches (e.g. work plans)
- present practical, realistic suggestions and solutions
- make sure that they are well informed

How Should Governments Involve Children And Young People In The Development Of National Plans Of Action?

As we have seen earlier, children and young people would welcome the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of National Plans of Action for children. They believe that their involvement would improve the quality and relevance of such plans. If this is to happen, governments would need to take a range of steps to create the right sort of environment for genuine children and young people’s participation in the NPA process. Children and young people in the consultations came up with a wide range of practical and detailed suggestions of how governments could do this. They include:

- Involve children from the very first moment and encourage their involvement throughout the whole process
- Be transparent about the process for the development of the National Plan of Action - be clear about the timetable and explain what is happening at all points
- Provide all the relevant information on children’s issues and the NPA process in simple language and circulate it widely e.g. by radio or a special newsletter
- Allow enough time!
- Make sure that children and young people have advance information about meetings
- Use child-friendly approaches to encourage children and young people’s participation – change adult procedures where necessary
- Be open about the resources that are available to support the process

“Offer relevant information on the NPA process in a child-friendly language”

“Provide information about the different specific issues. It should be easy to understand and easy to find”

“Organise advisory support – explain meaningful ways and mechanisms of young people’s possible involvement in the NPA drafting and implementation”

“Make plans in the calendar for meetings all year, ensure they take place”

“Establish meaningful contact with young people, come to us, come to schools, events and meetings”

“Provide CLEAR understandable answers to the questions of young people”

“Parents and the community need to provide support”

“Moral and financial support in terms of offering premises for meetings”

“Counselling, support and assistance on technical details and information crucial for realisation of different initiatives”

- Try and create opportunities to involve as many children and young people as possible in the process e.g. through setting up forums and debates or going around schools to explain what is happening
- Keep children and young people regularly updated on progress
- Give children and young people prompt responses and regular feedback on their contributions
- Remember that action is as important as talk – deliver on commitments
- Make the process as fair and honest as possible – fight corruption and dishonesty
- Use schools as a key place for distributing information, encouraging debate and bridging the gap between politicians and children and young people
- Consider using young ‘mentors’ or advisors to support the process (i.e. young adults with experience of similar processes), as well as ‘experts’ who could help children and young people turn their ideas into practical proposals in the right language
- If children and young people make good suggestions, make sure that their ideas are incorporated into the NPA and acknowledged
- Make sure that the government officials involved in developing the National Plan of Action understand the importance of children and young people’s involvement, are trained in child rights and know how to support children and young people’s participation

How Can Civil Society Support Children And Young People’s Involvement?

Children and young people’s participation in the development of National Plans of Action requires different kinds of support such as:

- ◆ Access to information
- ◆ Access to resources (including money, places to meet and computers)
- ◆ Training in skills such as facilitation, advocacy and negotiation
- ◆ Opportunities to share information and approaches with other groups of children and young people

Civil society groups – parents, community associations, Non Governmental Organizations, etc - can play an important role in providing that support. The children and young people in the consultation had a variety of ideas about the kind of civil society support that would be useful. This included:

- Moral and financial support to stay involved
- Persuading government that children and young people’s involvement is practical and worthwhile
- Training of children to facilitate the maximum participation of children and young people in the NPA process e.g. giving children and young people access to new skills and knowledge to improve their effectiveness in consultations.

“NGOs and civil society should encourage children’s participation by orienting the adults on the rights of the child. They should also be trained on creating an enabling environment”

“NGOs should lobby with the government for child participation”

“[NGOs] should conduct consultations for the NPA.....until children’s organisations come up and establish horizontal and vertical linkages”

“[NGOs should] spread information about the NPA”

“Always provide space for [younger children]”

“Ensuring that younger children are involved in setting rules for participation in any decision making process”

“Through joint actions of educators and young people in creative workshops”

“Through active inclusion of parents”

“They can organise a ‘school tour’ at primary schools to inform younger children on the NPA”

“They can involve young children in a ‘fun’ way (through a play, puppet show, movie, youth journal, school television)”

- Training of adults in government to overcome their resistance to children and young people’s involvement and to give them the confidence and skills to encourage children’s involvement
- Support to capacity-building with child-led and youth-led organisations
- Acting as an intermediary and facilitator between government and children and young people
- Supporting peer (child-led) research to produce evidence to support children’s advocacy
- Producing child friendly versions of key documents
- Working with children and young people to follow up on government promises and hold governments accountable
- Organising meetings to share information and consult with children and young people

How Can We Ensure That All Voices Are Heard?

Children and young people were asked how governments and others could ensure that *all* children are able to play a full part in developing National Plans of Action. In particular, they were asked about how to make sure that younger children, girls and children from marginalised groups were included in the process. The children and young people's recommendations included:

Younger Children Under 12 years of Age

- Ensuring that younger children are given the same consideration as older children when planning the involvement of children and young people in the process
- Involving younger children in setting the rules for children and young people participation in any consultation or decision making processes
- Organising 'fun' activities and methods such as a play, puppet show, video, drawing competitions or children's newspaper
- Support from older children to explain, inform and encourage younger children to work on this
- Encouragement to parents to be actively involved in the NPA process themselves and to work together with their younger children to consider the issues and develop a response
- Using a story book or short movie/video to explain what the NPA is and ask them questions about it
- Organising special workshops and education in schools for younger children
- Involve younger people in the activities of older young people

"Representatives of boys and girls should be elected. They should be responsible for ensuring a balanced input from boys and girls"

"Through creating a programme which would be equally interesting and inviting for both girls and boys"

"Boys and girls should be equally invited for any activity"

"Have young people sign a letter of commitment to involve equal participation of all young people"

"While involving people with different abilities the facilitators should have special training to understand and respond to the needs of these young people and children"

"Involve them in all activities arranged for young people, ensure space is reserved specifically for them"

"Provide information in their own language, at their level. Put extra effort in reaching these children"

"Always ensure a space where they can participate"

"Work with NGOs that work with these young people"

Girls and Boys

- Adult facilitators of consultations or other NPA processes should have a good understanding of gender issues and ensure equal participation of girls and boys
- Programmes of activities and events should be equally interesting for both girls and boys
- All children and young people involved in the NPA process should commit themselves to ensuring the equal participation of all children and young people
- Children and young people who are chosen to represent larger groups of children and youth should be elected in ways that ensure a balance of girls and boys
- Ensuring that equal numbers of girls and boys are invited to any meeting or consultation
- Through reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as the basis for ensuring equality between girls and boys

Marginalised groups with different abilities

- Adult facilitators need to understand and respond appropriately to the special needs of these children and young people
- Provide materials in all languages in a country and in formats which enable all children to get involved (e.g. audio tapes, large print, Braille)
- Ask such groups what they require in order to be fully involved in the NPA process and consider special care and funding to support their involvement
- Make sure that meeting spaces and other arrangements are suitable for their involvement and support their successful participation
- Co-operate with NGOs with experience in ensuring their inclusion in such processes
- Link them up with more able young people who can support their participation
- Make sure that they are represented in children and young people's organisations

How Should Children And Young People Be Involved In The Implementation And Monitoring Of NPAs?

“The children should be made part of the committees to review and monitor the implementation of the NPAs at the village, district and state level..... The children should be consulted periodically on the implementation of the NPA”

“[Children and young people] have to be kept updated on the reports. It should therefore be obliged for governments to give feedback on the development of the implementation”

“By creating a permanent representative group to be in continuous contact with the NPA processes”

Tasks and responsibilities included in the NPA process should be known by all stakeholders and decision makers, enabling them to work together in very precise terms and timetables”

“Children should maintain contact with media, NGOs and other international structures to ensure that pressure is put on the authorities to enforce children’s rights”

The development of National Plans of Action is the *beginning* of the process of creating a better world for children. Once the National Plans of Action have been prepared they need to be turned into practical action and regularly checked to see if they are achieving their goals and targets. Children and young people would like to be able to contribute to the implementation of the National Plans of Action as well as playing a part in the monitoring of their success or failure in achieving their goals. They suggested that this could happen in various ways:

- Through the creation of a permanent representative group of children and youth to be in continuous contact with the NPA process
- Children could work with their own organisations and other adult community-based and national organisations to review and monitor implementation at different levels
- Through regular feedback meetings by government to discuss progress in implementing the National Plan of Action
- Children and young people would need regular feedback on the progress of implementation
- Monitoring days could be organised to review if what was agreed in the National Plan of Action was being implemented.

“Write a good letter to government to explain why participation of youth is important”

“Organise regional forums with local and national authorities so that adults listen to the voices of young people”

“Criticise government through the media”

“Organise an information campaign with brochures, web site, articles in the newspaper, commercials, visiting schools, youth clubs and sports organisations. The campaign should be developed by young people and it should be interesting and useful”

“Never give up!”

“Contact various media to put pressure on government”

“Contact NGOs for help”

“Show that very many young people are in favour of participation by presenting a petition”

“Organise ourselves with other institutions, organisations, communities, schools and neighbourhoods.”

What Methods And Approaches Can Children And Young People Use In Order To Have Greater Influence On The Development Of NPAs?

The involvement of children and young people in the development of national Plans of Action at a relatively early stage and there is limited experience of it among both governments and children and young people. However, children and young people have been actively involved in other kinds of work to influence government decision-making for some time. Children and young people in the consultation were asked about methods and approaches they used in order to communicate their ideas to government and increase the chances that governments would listen to them. Their responses included:

- Invite representatives of central and local government to meet with groups of children to discuss how they might be involved in the NPA process and how communication between children and government can be improved.
- Write letters and organise petitions requesting the involvement of children in the NPA process
- Prepare a realistic and concrete ‘alternative’ NPA to show what children and young people think should happen.
- Make sure that children’s committees, children’s parliaments and other networks of children and young people are involved in pressing for children and young people to be actively involved in the NPA process
- Public education - raise awareness of parents, communities and the general public about the development of NPAs and the importance of children and young people’s involvement
- Involving the media – explain to them what is happening and try to make sure children and young people’s perspectives are heard
- Campaigning – organise public campaigns to raise awareness and press for action on the most important issues
- Ask national and international NGOs to advocate with governments for them to listen to children and young people as they develop their NPAs.

"[Children] would feel happy and proud"

"Children would know that government respects their rights"

"It would be a great achievement for the young people"

"Participating in the preparation of NPAs gives us [the children] satisfaction that we are considered as citizens, that children are recognised as an important tool in realising our rights"

"The adults should understand our problems, aspirations and feelings better. This will lead to healthy relationships between children and adults"

What Would It Look Like For Children And Young People To Be Meaningfully Involved In The Preparation Of NPAs?

The children and young people in the consultation were asked what it might look or feel like if they were genuinely involved in the development of national Plans of Action. Their responses reflect their genuine concern to be involved in the NPA process and the satisfaction that such involvement would bring them.

Endpiece - Children's Evaluation of the Consultation

After the consultation the children and young people were asked about their feelings and views on the consultation event. It seems to have been both demanding and enjoyable.

"It was stimulating and instructive, it was fun, it required lots of effort but it was worth it – every moment! I think we should have much more gatherings of this kind, as these youthful events mean only one thing to me – loads of new ideas, energy and fun! Enthusiasm of young people should be used in the right way, as we are a powerful machine, which should be handled with care – that is our message to adults!"

Maria 17

"...our first impressions are absolutely positive! With two days of hard work which brought about more than successful results, in our modest opinion we have managed to enjoy a very special setting and company which made this weekend even more memorable. Having perceived all importance and significance of our task, in addition to our wish to contribute with our work to put participation of young people in society into practice, we have invested a part of ourselves in order to make the first outline of NPA as complete as possible..."

Tiana and Dragana, 17

"My dreams were growing during our discussions, my ideas became mature with other people's thoughts, my rights were respected in the same proportion as I have expressed my respect for the other's rights. Today, I love Man who helped me to be a child with his childish side, and I love all the people who are working along his side to accomplish similar ideas with the same motives in their hearts....."

Ana 17