

Research report

CHILDREN'S SELF-ORGANIZATION AS CITIZENS IN EUROPEAN CONTEXT

KGR: Kids Got Rights project



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA



CHILDREN'S SELF-ORGANIZATION AS CITIZENS IN EUROPEAN CONTEXT - RESEARCH REPORT

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This project was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020).

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1. Introduction	4
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2. Methodological route	6
-------------------------	---

3. Self-analysis of the concept of children's rights	9
3.1. What is a right?	9
3.2. What rights do children have?	11
3.3. Why should children have rights?	12

4. Self-analysis of the state of Children's Rights	14
4.1. Do you think rights are guaranteed for every child?	14
4.2. What can we do to guarantee them?	16

5. Self-analysis of the process	19
5.1. How did we do it?	19
5.1.1. Methodological strategies that helped shape the Kids Hubs	19
5.1.2. Moments and roles	23
5.2. Strengths and difficulties of the leadership experience according to the children	25
5.2.1. Strengths	25
5.2.2. Difficulties	27

6. Self-analysis of the learnings	31
6.1. Children's perspective	31
6.1.1. Children's learnings	31
6.1.2. Key elements for learnings	34
6.1.3. Capacity for self-organisation	36
6.1.4. Empowerment moment	40
6.2. Adults' perspective	43
6.2.1. Children's learnings	43
6.2.2. Key elements in children's learnings about their rights	45
6.2.3. Adults' learnings	47
6.2.4. Children's capacity to self-organise	49

7. Key Findings	52
-----------------	----

8. European recommendations	54
-----------------------------	----

9. List of participants	58
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1. INTRODUCTION

In this report, we present the results of the research, which aimed to assess the impact of self-organisation of children aged 8-13 years on their development as citizens in the European context, identifying key aspects and superheroes of children's human rights in the seven European countries participating in the Kids Got Rights! Project. The voices of children and educators from the following organisations are included: Arciragazzi-Italy (Arciragazzi), DUI-LEG og Virke-Denmark (DUI), Associació d'esplais catalans-Spain (ESPLAC), Kinderfreunde-Austria (ÖKF), Nouret Kotkat-Finland (NKK), Slovenian Falcons - Slovenian (SFYU) and Woodcraft Folk-England (WCF).

The specific objectives of this project are the following:

- Educate and raise children and adults' awareness of children's rights, with a specific focus on participation rights.
- Support children in critically assessing the state of children's rights in their everyday lives (schools, families, organisations, etc.) through the development of quality standards for the mainstreaming of children's rights.
- Empower children to facilitate their self-organisation in groups to claim their rights and make a complaint when their rights are violated.
- Build knowledge on the state of child participation rights in children's organisations, as well as the impact of the self-organisation of children on their development as citizens in a European context.

We have used a co-design methodology to consider how to advocate for these rights. We show the data and results obtained on the current state of children's participation and the impact of self-organisation at different levels: local, national and European Union.

The report is structured in seven sections: the first section is introductory, in the second, we show the methodological route, and in the third, we present the results of the concept of children's rights self-analysis, the participants' reflections on what they understand by rights, the reasons why children should have rights and what rights do they have, and their level of knowledge about them.

The fourth section is to self-analyse the feeling of having them guaranteed in order to be able to carry out a proposal for awareness-raising and dissemination in this sense. It details how residential training has been carried out to strengthen the relationship between the groups in the various participating countries, and offers a series of recommendations or suggestions that these groups put forward for the future. We present the actions carried out by the participating organisations in each of the countries: purpose, objectives, contents, participants' profile and the process followed, as well as the methodological strategies used to strengthen and shape the Kids Hubs - planning, preparation, knowledge and self-knowledge, conception, decision making, and evaluation-. We have identified the different moments the Kids Hubs for children and adults have gone through: the pooling, the preparation and the actions carried out, and the roles assumed by the participants - presenter, facilitator, technician, material arranger, observer, time controller-.

The fifth section shows the participants' contributions, which led us to recognise the strengths and difficulties of putting the planned processes into practice. The sixth section focuses on the learning acquired at both individual and group levels.

We conclude with a description of the best juncture, agreed by the participants of the entire project. As a final result, we draw some conclusions and propose recommendations for all EU member states.

2. METHODOLOGICAL ROUTE

The methodological approach chosen is research that integrates active participatory methodologies where research and innovation are developed in collaboration with the agents involved. In this case, the agents are the children, who, in the different participatory actions, have taken decisions to shape the co-design process and to analyse its transformation process. A total of 105 children participated in the study.

This study answers the following research questions:

- *What is children's knowledge of rights?*
- *What actions do children propose to shape the Kids Hubs? And to guarantee children's rights?*
- *What aspects do they assess as favouring and/or hindering Kids Hubs?*
- *How has their involvement in the Kids Hubs co-design and implementation?*
- *What are the children's perceptions and stands regarding their participation in the Kids Hubs?*

These research questions feed the analytical framework that takes the form of six interrelated stages in which children have been immersed, sometimes at the national level and sometimes in international meetings, that have favoured the exchange and collective analysis of the Kids Hubs process.

Stage 1 - Children's Rights Superheroes. Each partner organisation forms a national group of 15 children, so-called Children's Rights Superheroes.

Stage 2 - Kick-off Meeting. The main objective of this meeting is to train coordinators and children on how to use the co-design methodology for the self-analysis.

Stage 3 - Co-design. Design of the fieldwork, defining the methodology and instruments for gathering information.

Stage 4 - Kids Hubs. Kids Hubs are co-designed in each country, and information is collected in each experience.

Stage 5 - Data analysis. The information is analysed, interpreted, and validated with the children.

Stage 6 - Report. Drafting of the report.

The study's participatory perspective points out the opportunity to think of the data collection techniques as spaces to produce information, and practices to discuss the defence of children's rights from their experience of organising Kids Hubs in a co-design process. The techniques used are:

Co-design process workshops: six workshops were held in which participatory and participation activities were used to facilitate the co-design process by exploring their knowledge of rights, the strategies they suggest for rights training, and the concreteness and preparation of the proposed tasks. On the other hand, the workshops combined the analysis of the co-design process and its impact.

The six workshops incorporated research and training activities of the following typologies:

- **Introductory:** these consist of introducing the challenges, clarifying their development, gathering expectations, and negotiating their execution.
- **Analytical:** the objective of these workshops is to identify knowledge about children's rights and the stages, strategies and roles used in the leadership of a participatory experience.
- **Training:** in these workshops, the aim is to identify previous knowledge to nurture new learning.
- **Co-design:** space for creation. There have been workshops in which the children themselves have collaboratively self-managed the Kids Hubs in this project.
- **Of feedback and debate:** meetings for reflection and shared training with the children to validate the research project results.
- **Imagining futures:** the final moments are dedicated to collaboratively defining actions, considering the desired objective and the resources available to achieve it.

Individual questionnaires to deepen their knowledge about rights, their Kids Hubs assessment, and the learning developed.

Focus groups with children to 1) gather their perceptions and opinions on the actions promoted for the Kids Hubs co-design process, and 2) identify new actions suggested by them and possible innovations that can be established in the defence of rights to advance.

The data analysis is based on content analysis, informant perspectives, and triangulation techniques. The data analysis was done by collaborating with the children themselves in some cases. Thus, analysing the data with the group has potentially enriched the research, as new information and opinions have emerged for consideration.

At all times, the methodological process has been informed by the Keeping Children Safe Standards⁵.

3. SELF-ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

To begin the research, we considered it essential for all groups to reflect on the project's groundwork and highlight participants' prior knowledge and personal experiences of children's rights.

3.1. What is a right?

In this first question, "What is a right?" we identify four different interpretations for its meaning:

Right as a need. Most children understand a right as a vital necessity, a fundamental element. Some even refer to a more global dimension, saying that it is a need for everyone.

"It's a need." ESPLAC

"It's something everyone should have." Arciragazzi

"It's a thing that everyone must have." Arciragazzi

Right as a norm. Another interpretation is the relationship between a right and a norm. They compare right to human obligation, i.e., they define right as an evident and indisputable norm for all people, which should always be complied with. Furthermore, they specify that rights are not abstract but that there are people responsible for ensuring that everyone, without any exclusion, has their rights guaranteed and that, therefore, rights are undeniable. In this affirmation, they introduce social justice as an element of tension with rights, pointing to discrimination and social inequality.

"Same as a rule, but more specific." NKK

"Rules which protect us." SFYU

"It's an obvious rule, it's implied, and it implies being respected as a human being." Arciragazzi

"It's something that nobody can deny you." Arciragazzi

"It's something that we should all have, with no distinction, and that can help us against injustice." Arciragazzi

Rights as the basis of human well-being. They explain that a right is a minimum that must be fulfilled to live in good conditions. Furthermore, they point out that people are social beings and that our rights are directly related to living together, emphasising that in order to live with other people in the community, we need rights. They describe rights as the protection of oneself and others. However, some point out that rights are not synonymous with well-being as there is more to it. The simple fact of having rights does not mean that this is sufficient to live in good conditions.

"A right is the minimum that must be fulfilled." ESPLAC

"Rights are the basis of welfare, but not always." ESPLAC

"Rights allow us to live with other people." NKK

"A right allows us to respect others and be respected for others."

Arciragazzi

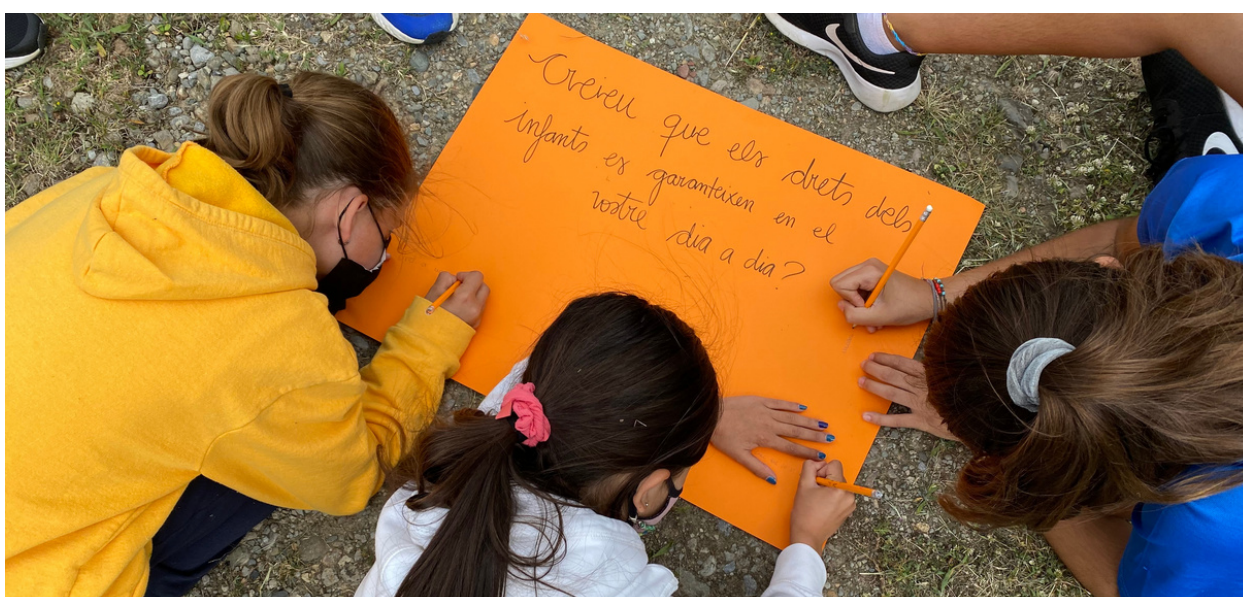
Rights as freedom. Finally, many answers associate rights with the possibility of doing things, i.e., rights allow you to freely fulfil your needs, motivations, and desires. Thus, in this case, they establish a bidirectional relationship between rights and the freedom of subjects. However, some define a right as a condition, mentioning that not being entitled to rights is a constraint on securing freedom.

"Freedom to do something without being criticised." Arciragazzi

"A right is something that I can do/have and that makes me feel good."

Arciragazzi

"A right is to be free to be oneself and never to be judged for it." Arciragazzi



Children from ESPLAC doing a self-analysis activity: Silence debate.

3.2. What rights do children have?

The second question aims to identify children's knowledge of their rights. In general, all groups of children can name some of their rights. Below are the rights they identify:



However, while the children list them, they do so hesitantly, i.e., they have an intuition that what they name is a child's right, but they are not entirely clear about it. For this reason, although everyone can name one, **they state that they do not know all or even most of their rights in all cases.**

"I know the basics, but I don't remember everything" NKK

"I think I know about children's rights, but I am not sure." ESPLAC

"I cannot name them properly, we use descriptors." SFYU

Two groups also emphasise that it is difficult for them to understand their rights in the formats in which they are presented. They, therefore, indicate the **need for children's rights to be presented more understandably.** They emphasise the need to develop children's rights documents using more child-friendly language and consider children's needs and interests in their design.

"We don't know all our own rights. When we were shown many documents with the rights written, we found them too complicated to understand." ESPLAC

"It's hard to understand the Children's Rights' list." WcF

"It could be interesting to write the rights in a more child-friendly style." ESPLAC

On the other hand, they also point out that they do not know where to go for **information** and to find out about them, i.e., they do not know if there is a place where they can find them written down. Hence, they inform that they have difficulties accessing their rights. The same group adds that age is another obstacle in searching for spaces, documents, and materials on children's rights.

"I am not quite sure where to look them up and how good they are to us (the lower the age, the worse it is)." SFYU

3.3. Why should children have rights?

Focusing on children, the third question emphasises why they should have rights. In this question, we identified 4 general reasons:

Because we are persons. They compare themselves to adults, noting that if adults have rights by the simple fact of being human, children must also have rights. In some cases, a first differentiation is made between the rights of adults and those of children, stating that they need rights but not the same rights. They observe that children need their own rights.

"Because we are all human, all equal, and therefore children should automatically have rights too." Arciragazzi

"Like the adults, we need rights, but more focused on us." WcF

For protection. Most children mention that they need protection rights because children are vulnerable. In this sense, they emphasise that rights should address children's basic needs and that these needs are not naturally guaranteed by society. They point out that children's rights are a guide to knowing what they need, and, therefore, they must be respected and ensure children's development.

"Because every child is vulnerable, and rights protect them." Arciragazzi

"To be respected by all." NKK

"Children's rights let others know what children need and so, what adults have to give us." ÖKF

"Children may be too young to look after themselves." NKK

To be recognised. They indicate that it is essential to have rights and that they need to be recognised and guaranteed. They point out that children need rights to be put into practice, i.e., adults need to ensure they are guaranteed. They give the example of how, for instance, having laws that guarantee children's rights is not enough because laws alone do not guarantee rights if they are not actually put into practice. In this case, they specify that it is important that adults advocate for and commit themselves to ensuring that children's rights are guaranteed in situations where they are violated.

"Laws that give children fundamental rights if someone is bullied and adult have the duty to address the bullying." NKK

"We need rights because otherwise we would be crushed by the will of another person." Arciragazzi

For having specific needs at a specific stage of life. Many pointed out that humans have specific needs at each stage of life, making it clear that childhood needs are different from those of adulthood.

"Children have different needs in their childhood." ESPLAC

"Children have different needs, for example, education, games." WcF

For well-being. Some groups point out that children must have rights to ensure their quality of life. Thus, they see rights as important in ensuring the well-being of children.

"Children need rights to live a free and worryless life." ÖKF

"To ensure the well-being of children." NKK

4. SELF-ANALYSIS OF THE STATE OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The previous questions focused on the definition of rights and were, consequently, explanatory answers. In this section, the questions look at their rights fulfilment degree. Children had to assess the state of their rights to answer the questions.

4.1. Do you think rights are guaranteed for every child?

Expanding our gaze, in this fourth question, we reflect, on the one hand, on whether children's rights are guaranteed, and, on the other hand, we discuss whether all children have the same guaranteed rights. We intend to analyse a more global and collective dimension beyond the first person. We assess whether, in a different context from our immediate environment, there is any difference in terms of children's rights fulfilment. Most of the children consider that, in their case, they do have their rights guaranteed, although some mention that many are indeed guaranteed, but not all of them.

"Yes, in our life." ESPLAC

"We may have many but sometimes not the necessary ones." ESPLAC

"We have many rights, but maybe not all." SFYU

Taking a more critical view, they reveal that **not all adults are equally aware of and committed to children's rights**, which shows that **the context influences their realisation**. They observe that a fundamental reason for this is that many people have little knowledge of children's rights, making it challenging to guarantee them. Also, some children say that there is a clear difference between the family, the leisure organisation, or the school.

"Most children and young people only possess rudimentary knowledge of children's rights." SFYU

"Not all adults guarantee children rights. Some instructors or teachers used guarantee them more than others." ÖKF

"Not in all places that we are, differences between school-house-hobbies-friends and their entity." ÖKF

On the one hand, in some groups, it is evident that schools are places where their rights are not fully guaranteed. They emphasise the importance of the school in their daily lives, expressing the desire for it to be more of a space of their own. They consider schools as essential contexts in advocating for their rights.

"Children's rights are not always met at school." WcF
"School is a place where children's rights still need to be implemented a lot." ÖKF

On the other hand, they feel that their rights are guaranteed in their leisure time education, considering the non-formal education organizations where they participate. The children say they feel respected and note that the educators always try to make them aware of their rights. Many children say that they feel fortunate to participate in a space where rights are respected and where they can learn about them.

"We feel really involved; here are people who listen to us, and don't just assume that we talk nonsense." ARC
"Most children are very lucky to have their rights met a lot of the time at WcF." WcF

They mention that in other countries, children have fewer guaranteed rights, to the extent that in some countries, children do not enjoy rights at all. This fact gives them an ambivalent feeling because, on one side, they feel lucky to have rights, but, on the flip side, they feel frustrated that other children do not benefit from the same rights.

"The rights of the child are not realised all over the world." WcF
"There are other countries where children have no rights." ESPLAC
"I feel happy because we have rights but also I feel frustrated that not all young people's rights are met." ESPLAC

A debate arises at this point as some children point out that not only there are differences between countries, but there are children with other realities close to them who also do not have the same rights. Along these lines, the children note a series of conditions that influence people whose rights are not guaranteed, such as sexual orientation, gender identity, functional diversity, and ethnicity, among others. They also point to the difference in fulfilling rights in a racist and sexist society.

"Most Children's rights are implemented for most of the children. But there are still some children (especially marginalised children) who are facing a violation of their rights." ÖKF

"Not all children have rights in all places (minority groups e.g., travellers, gypsies are often not respected as much)." WcF

"Racism and gender roles make a difference in the guarantee of rights." ESPLAC

"Boys and girls have the same rights, although in the working field they are not always respected." Arciragazzi

"All form of discrimination limit people's rights, for example LGBTIQ people in our country." Arciragazzi*

"Even though children's rights are accomplished in our lives , they aren't in other realities (social and economic context and gender differences)." NKK

4.2. What can we do to guarantee them?

This fifth question will allow us to identify the next steps of the project as imagined by the children. From their answers, we can plan the possible future courses of action, which will be carried out throughout the project's development. In their answers, we identified 4 types of actions:

Training. A first step is to dedicate space and time to rights education. Children identify that they need to know more about their rights. Therefore, they believe it is crucial to learn about rights in the public space and at school, where they spend a large part of their daily lives. In addition, and thinking about school, they suggest times when it would be appropriate to learn about rights, given that they see a direct relationship with the content of some curriculum areas. Finally, one group pointed out that it is pivotal to learn about rights and, at the same time, to find ways of informing those who do not comply with them.

"Educate children and young people on children's rights." SFYU

"Not all children know about rights and not all adults know: They should be talked about in public." ESPLAC

"For example, at school you should talk in an environmental / social science class." NKK

"It is important to make them know by everyone, but also make laws to fine those who do not respect them." ARC

Awareness raising and dissemination. As we have mentioned previously, they consider it essential that not only children know their rights, but society in general. Therefore, almost all groups of children point out that it is imperative to disseminate their rights or status to raise awareness among the rest of the population. Most of them aim to run social media campaigns with local and international impact. The ambition of these campaigns would be to claim the violation of children's rights and their rights to education. They also imagine that a possible action would be to create a rights office, a reference place led by children where they ensure that rights are guaranteed, organise activities, or make suggestions on the functioning of the organisations.

"Online campaign for children and young people." NKK

"Message in social media. Maybe people will see we're doing something, and they may contact us." Arciragazzi

"Preparing a short film." Arciragazzi

"Speak about it on the community radio show to raise awareness." WcF

"Campaign for local children." WcF

"Rights office." WcF

Develop child-friendly materials. For the above steps to become a reality, one group states that it is essential to have suitable materials. For this reason, the materials must be child-friendly, welcoming towards or suitable for children, and designed with the needs, interests of children in mind.

"Create child-friendly materials to educate on children's rights." ESPLAC

"Make games about children's rights." ESPLAC

Create a collaborative network. Another aspect they mention is the importance of doing it with the help of other individuals. They consider it essential to collaborate with other members because there are people or organisations that they would not know how to reach. So, seeking this collaboration would help have a more significant impact, i.e., reaching more people.

"Ask friends, family and our WcF leader to help." WcF

"Meet people out of our entity in order to let them know about our project." SFYU

"Make contact with other organisations." ESPLAC



Children from DUI-LEG og Virke working on their Self-analysis report.



Children from SFYU proposing ideas to create child-friendly materials.



Children from ÖKF linking ideas to create their self-analysis report.

5. SELF-ANALYSIS OF THE PROCESS

5.1. How did we do it?

After carrying out the Kids Hubs, we dedicated some sessions to analysing and evaluating the process. The aim was for the children themselves to identify which strategies, moments, and roles they had followed, and the strengths and difficulties of the experience.

5.1.1. Methodological strategies that helped shape the Kids Hubs

Analyzing the activities developed in each group of children allowed us to identify different methodological strategies to prepare and promote knowledge of children's rights. This analysis was based on the moral development strategies proposed by the Moral Education Research Group (GREM) of the Department of Theory and History of Education of the University of Barcelona. They helped identify strategies that favour the construction of a self and knowledge of the other that are oriented towards awareness, to approach knowledge in order to position and define oneself, strategies of coexistence that aim to favour the development of a social perspective and empathy, and strategies of socio-moral reflection that facilitate the analysis and understanding of the environment in order to take a stand and act. Strategies of these three types have been introduced in the different Kids Hubs and others that address the approach to children's rights, the concretisation of how to make it easier for others to know and reflect on them, and the planning of joint action for advocacy.

Analysing the adults' description of several activities, the following facilitating strategies have been identified (ranked from most repeated to least):

Planning and preparation strategies. The children help focus and specify the proposal that they consider most appropriate to develop the action and bring the other children closer to learning about and reporting the violation of rights. Specifically, the workshops set up were facilitated by deciding on the activities, their sequence, and their role at each moment.

"Weekend planning is based on a poster where there is an outline made by the playworkers and leaders, and they fill it in together by means of a game." Arciragazzi

"Planning of the speech." DUI

"Afternoon preparation of the workshops in small groups." NKK

"Present the plan of the day, the first workshop in small groups for the speech we will have to make at the Kids Hubs." SFYU

"In small groups, prepare the games." WcF

It should be noted that there were also **strategies for organising and leading the action** in this preparation, which involved specifying the actions they decided to do and how to do them. Preparation involved who did what, and how they did it. Somehow the groups organised themselves to see what was needed to work together to achieve the challenges.

"They decide on rules for working together. [...]. End with a session where they write together 10 recommendations to consider to lead the Kids Hubs." WcF

"Make a list of what needs to be done to organise the workshops and divide it into 4 phases of the process." ESPLAC

Knowledge and self-knowledge strategies. In the first preparation sessions, the children were to learn about their knowledge of children's rights and identify what knowledge they intended to share with their peers. These strategies were supported by sources of information that facilitated the understanding and internalisation of knowledge (videos, news, laws, etc.) and strategies for critical comprehension of the lived reality and the violation of children's rights.

"Jamboard to share what we know about children's rights." SFYU

"Compasito games for children to work on rights, social discrimination and making decisions about kids hubs." Arciragazzi

"Each puzzle contains a news item about child exploitation. Then they place each news item in the country where they think it happens.[...]

Introduction of the topic from a messy comic.[...] External training on rights at school. Each person reads an extract from the current law. [...]

Compare

the text to the reality of their school and share it with the rest of the group." ÖKF

"Work with children's rights, put them in order and read them. Identify where children's rights are not recognised. [...] They do a quiz to find general facts, and finally, they get to know personal stories." WcF

Strategies for conception. The children shaped the Kids Hubs. They needed to think creatively about how they imagined they could facilitate their peers' approach to children's rights enjoyably while at the same time deepening their understanding and establishing a stance.

"First workshop in small groups to talk about what we will need to make Kids Hubs. Second workshop in small groups to devise Kids Hubs (led by the children)." SFYU

"Reflect on how to promote children's rights using tools to spread them. Then they think of games to train on rights." WcF

Decision-making strategies. The configuration of the Kids Hubs involved a process of creation and conception in which children identified what they considered to be conducive to knowing their rights. After the first moment of ideation, of proposing different options creatively, they needed to focus on and choose what was most interesting for them according to their criteria.

"They have an activity book at their disposal from which they choose methods of interest for their own Kids Hubs. They only decide on the methods." ÖKF

"Once they have chosen the games, they prepare the final scheme." ESPLAC

Strategies for sharing and pooling. It was identified that, after a space for preparation by groups, spaces were promoted to share what they had shaped and what they proposed to carry out in front of other children.

"Reflection based on videos to be shared with other project members." DUI

"Sharing the prepared materials, each group presents the games." ESPLAC

"They share the games they have prepared. Training afternoon on child labour." WcF

Evaluation strategies. This is a cross-cutting strategy permanently present in planning and decision-making. However, it had a prominent presence to encourage the children to see themselves in action and recognise their progress, their strengths and achievements, and those aspects that needed to be rethought, as well as reconsider themselves in the face of these. Most sessions included activities that allowed them to stop and think about themselves and recognise that they are active agents in their own lives. These strategies favoured the development of their progressive autonomy and sense of agency.

"Evaluation activity and talk about the project's next steps." WcF

"Evaluation activity. What would I keep, what would I change, what would I share." ÖKF

"For evaluation, they use an emotional dynamic: Who is in the box. Mention one positive aspect of each group member." Arciragazzi

"Each group presents the games and evaluates which ones they think can work." ESPLAC

Reflection, questioning, clarification, and communication are cross-cutting strategies in all the activities. These strategies enabled children to give more meaning and sense to the proposals to develop the Kids Hubs. The triggered activities to accompany the groups in achieving the challenge were loaded with strategies that the children had experienced firsthand. These were, in turn, incorporated into the activities they prepared for their peers so that they could experience and incorporate them to deepen their knowledge of children's rights. The strategies were presented through games and playful activities that facilitated the children's engagement.

5.1.2. Moments and roles

The children identified that the Kids Hubs development had different moments and unfolded the necessary roles in their preparation and organisation. Despite not naming them, they differentiate three moments in the development of the Kids Hubs. We call them: Pooling, Preparation, and Implementation to make it easier to understand.

The pooling is the first stage. It consists of focusing on the topic they will talk about and exploring everything they know, i.e., brainstorming and trying to respond to the challenge they are posed with. In this stage, the children say that they jointly decide on the theme of their Kids Hubs and the possible activities they want to develop, drawing up a joint plan.

The second moment they identify is **preparation**. At this stage, they imagine the tasks they need to carry out to achieve the challenge and divide them up, deciding which task each of them will do. Likewise, they also divide up the roles they will take on Kids Hubs Day. They also take the opportunity to arrange the materials. In some cases, there is a space for conversation, and in others, they use a written tool to evaluate what has and has not been done to identify where efforts need to be made before developing the plan.

The last stage is the **putting into action** that takes place on Kids Hubs Day. This stage consists of following the established plan of activities and playing. In this stage, we identify different roles for the children. The children present and lead the activities, encouraging the participation of the attendees and ensuring their understanding.

Finally, although the children did not mention it, the research group invited them to make a final **evaluation**. This evaluation aimed to put words to the experience and identify strengths and weaknesses. Thus, indirectly, the process has a fourth stage, the experience evaluation. In the following sections, the information is drawn on the basis of the children's contributions in this final stage.

The development of the proposal they planned has led to the emergence of different roles in the Kids Hubs. Some of the roles were taken on by the whole group, some in small groups, and others individually.

ROLE	PURPOSE
Presenter	<p>Keep the group on track during the session.</p> <p>Give information and draw attention to the topic.</p>
Facilitator	<p>Ask the questions and lead the discussion.</p> <p>Listen to the participants' opinions and ideas.</p> <p>Explain to the participants how to play and do the activity, give the instructions.</p> <p>Make sure that everyone has understood the activity.</p>
Technician	Deal with Zoom.
Material Arranger	<p>Write flipcharts while the other facilitator moderates the discussion. Divide tasks up.</p> <p>Useful to set this up whilst they are leading the first part of the session</p>
Observer	Those who do not lead the activity observe to discuss afterwards what went right or wrong during the workshop.
Time controller	Keep track of the timing to ensure that the workshop runs on time.

Roles and purposes identified by children in their Residential Training and Kids Hubs experience.

5.2. Strengths and difficulties of the leadership experience according to the children

5.2.1. Strengths

In the evaluation, we also dedicated a series of questions to reflect on those positive aspects the children wished to maintain for the following experiences. As is the case in the following section, some contributions coincide between groups, and others are specific to a particular group.

As we have said in previous sections, all groups can identify a moment of preparation when deciding what, how and by whom each task will be carried out. Thus, according to the children, preparation is the first aspect to maintain. Specifically, they define it as feeling prepared: being clear about the general schedule, the materials and the explanation of each activity, and the different moments of intervention of each group member. For all these reasons, they point out that it is necessary to dedicate time to study the activity, i.e., to internalise it. Finally, they point out that it is always necessary to dedicate some time to rehearse it in a familiar environment to get a first impression of how it looks.

“Being prepared: knowing what came next and all the activities in the workshop.” SFYU

“Studying the activity to memorise explanations” Arciragazzi

“Make sure you know what the activities are and what they are about before the session so you can be an expert.” WcF

Teamwork is another aspect to be maintained. Although, in some cases, they consider it to be an aspect that could be improved, all the groups identify it as a fundamental element in the Kids Hubs to a greater or lesser extent. Thus, they consider it impossible to carry out this activity without working towards the same objective. In this sense, they point out that communication is a key element when working as a team. Likewise, dividing tasks equally is another important factor.

“Working together (communication is key) and dividing work equally”.

ÖKF

“We all together planned the sessions.” SFYU

“Doing it together, we couldn’t just do it alone.” SFYU

Concerning the implementation, they mention that it is vital to have the **ability to improvise**. On Kids Hubs Day, some groups had to face changes and modifications in relation to what was previously planned. For this reason, some felt that, although it was essential to be very clear about the day's structure, it was also essential to be flexible and adapt to the current situation. They comment that it is essential to balance preparation and improvisation.

“We had to make changes to plans, but we made it!” NKK

“I had to improvise a lot but everything worked out fine.” ÖKF

“Balance between preparation and improvisation, or being opened about the situation.” ÖKF

Another aspect to keep is the **pleasant atmosphere** of the day. One group describes that having managed to create a pleasant atmosphere was essential for the activity to run smoothly. Likewise, in those groups where they managed to create a good atmosphere distinguished by help and engagement, the children verbalised that they felt more confident in their leadership roles. Therefore, they emphasise that this working atmosphere helped them feel supported and further enjoy the experience.

“Participants were very open towards us and kept asking questions.”

ÖKF

“Everyone helped and worked together, and it was really fun.” ÖKF

“The assistants enjoy a lot and that helps us to feel comfortable.” ESPLAC

One of the groups explained that they dedicated time to **group cohesion** before starting the session. This time was aimed to reduce distress and to feel relaxed. The children who participated in this moment considered that it was a pivotal juncture because it helped them release their nerves.

“Relaxing before starting (we met before the workshop and talked a bit and played some games to help us relax).” SFYU

Another aspect to consider is the **space**, i.e., the place where the activity occurs. One group says that choosing an open-plan, quiet space with room to move around made it easier for them to make the activity work. They consider that if they were to repeat the experience, they would choose a place with these characteristics.

“We decided to do the Kids Hubs in a park. That was a great idea, almost no noise and a lot of space to have fun.” ESPLAC

Last but not least, **fun and motivation** are other important elements for all groups. In the evaluations, children from all groups constantly mentioned that having an active attitude, predisposed to enjoy the leadership experience, was one of the main objectives. Therefore, they value that the ability to have fun to enjoy the experience is, in any case, one of the aspects to be noted in future experiences.

“Tip for next time: have fun!” ÖKF

“Fun and motivation are important for good performance.” ÖKF

“Be active in instructing the workshops.” NKK

“Staying calm and remembering that we are there to enjoy the session as well as teach people new things.” WcF

5.2.2. Difficulties

Each group identified the issues that made it difficult to organise and implement the day during the evaluation. Some aspects are repeated in the different groups; others only pertain to one group in particular.

As for **planning**, one group identified that it was difficult for them to know where to start. They did not know the steps to follow to organise an activity of this type. About this first step, they also identified that they found it difficult to divide up the roles, i.e., to decide what each person would do and for what purpose.

“It was difficult starting the planning. We didn’t know what we had to do first. It was a little difficult to figure out what roles to take.” NKK

In some cases, they mention moments in the process when **cooperation** between peers was lacking. They point out how important **teamwork** is in all those moments prior to the activity. Another aspect related to teamwork and group roles is counting on several children when leading the activity. One group stated that it was difficult for them to lead the whole day and felt it was necessary to share the leading tasks.

“Not everyone helped in preparation.” ÖKF

“We could have had more of us instructing the workshop. Even though there weren't that many kids, we had to work hard.” NKK

“Tip for next time: don't be afraid to ask each other for help.” WcF

Another difficulty is the **preparation time**. One of the groups explained that the preparation time management was an aspect to be improved in their case. They also say that they prepared some tasks hours before the start and thought that this was not a good idea since it was impossible to check that everything was in order and they forgot materials. Therefore, they recommend arriving on the activity day with everything already arranged.

“Little time for preparation. So, for next time, we should plan more time than necessary (better too much than too little time).” ÖKF

“Missing resources because we didn't have enough time for going through the schedule in more detail directly before.” ÖKF

They also comment that there were always **uncertainties** around the number of attendees or if someone from the team would have an incident that would cause them not to come, whether from the organising group or the leading one. The exact number of attendees is never known, nor is it possible to ensure that someone from the organisation is not missing. There were more participants than expected in one group, and children were missing from the organising team. Faced with this situation, they believe it is important to be flexible and have alternatives. Likewise, another group emphasises that it is essential to participate in the organising sessions to materialise the workshops.

“More participants than planned. It wasn't a big problem, but we had to improvise.” ÖKF

“We lacked couple superheroes from our group, so we had to make changes to plans, but we made it!” NKK

“Not everyone could go to the Residential Training, so some of us felt lost during the Kids Hubs.” ESPLAC

About the implementation, in all groups some members expressed that they felt **nervous and embarrassed** at some point. Due to the lack of such experiences, many children admit the activity made them uneasy, forgetting what they were supposed to say or changing the order of the explanation. However, they say that it was very helpful not to be alone in these situations, i.e., to have the help of peers.

“I was very nervous! And I sometimes forgot what I had to say, but the others helped me then.” SFYU

“I didn't have much difficulty even though I felt a bit shy.” Arciragazzi

“A tip for next time: stay calm.” WcF

“We felt good, but very nervous”. ESPLAC

Regarding **feeling comfortable and confident**, another aspect mentioned is self-confidence. Even though many children express that they felt insecure and nervous, they value self-confidence as an element to work on for future leadership. Specifically, the children mention that they must lose the fear of making mistakes and not knowing the answers to the assistants' questions.

“Don't be worried about making mistakes.” SFYU

“Staying calm and remembering that we are there to enjoy the session as well as teach people new things.” WcF

“If you don't know the answer to a question it's okay to say you don't know or 'let's find out together'.” WcF

“Not take things too seriously. It doesn't matter if it doesn't go perfect the first time.” NKK

Understanding the activities was sometimes an obstacle, either because the games were too complex or because, due to nervousness, it was difficult to find the right words to explain them. Some children consider it important to be clear about what to say to speak clearly. They also recommend making simple games that are not complicated to explain or understand. Finally, another group suggests looking for mechanisms to ensure that the participants understand how the activity should be carried out.

“Prepare easier games for next time.” ESPLAC

“We felt nervous, so it was hard to speak clearly. For this reason, it is really important to have a clear explanation of the game.” ESPLAC

“Next time: make sure everyone knows what they are doing.” SFYU

One of the difficulties most identified by all the groups is **getting the attention and involvement of the Kids Hubs participants**. For example, it was difficult to capture the audience's attention during the activity and maintain a pleasant atmosphere, keep quiet at the beginning, and prevent participants from talking during the activity. Thus, most of the groups emphasise that they need techniques, on the one hand, to capture the attention and, on the other hand, to motivate the audience and encourage their participation.

“Getting other kids to work with us. When we played games, it was fine, but it was harder to get them to talk in some activities. I didn't know how to let them know that whatever they said would be right and that there were no wrong answers.” SFYU

“Try to learn some techniques to get people talking.” SFYU

“Starting the session was hard as I felt unprepared but as it went on it got easier. However, people are not always listening.” WcF

Finally, although all the groups could carry out the activities in person, one group had to do it remotely. In this case, they feel that the **online format** did not convince them, and they consider it was challenging to maintain the assistants' attention and make the activity dynamic in a digital environment.

“Zoom, I am really tired of it and I do not know how to work it.” SFYU

“Don't do it online!” SFYU

6. SELF-ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNINGS

Finally, the individual questionnaires addressed to children and educators made it possible to analyse the learning acquired about children's rights, children's capacity for self-organisation, and their empowerment in the course of the project .

6.1. Childrens perspective

6.1.1. Children's learnings

The contributions of the children who have led the Kids Hubs have enabled us to identify learning around knowledge of rights, group work, participation, language, and culture. These are described below.

On knowledge of rights. The most frequently mentioned learning experiences build on children's rights. The children identify the project as a rights formative experience to the extent that some say it has allowed them to discover their existence. Others emphasise that they have discovered their rights, highlighting that they could not imagine children having so many rights. Others point out that, despite all the children's rights, they have identified that not all rights are guaranteed, and not all children are guaranteed the same rights. Thus, they stress, on the one hand, the social and political shortcomings in guaranteeing rights and, on the other hand, the inequality between children.

"Rights are something that no one can deny to you and that everyone has equally but they are not implemented for everyone." Arciragazzi

"Children have more rights than I expected." ESPLAC

"I learnt really much about all the kids rights, like I didn't know about them before this Kids Got Rights-project." NKK

Still talking about rights learning, it should be noted that, although few, some children said that in previous experiences, they had already talked and learnt about children's rights. However, the children themselves point out that KGR project has allowed them to refresh some of their previous knowledge and deepen their understanding of their rights.

"I haven't learnt a lot of new things but I have been confirmed in what I already knew from our own work with kids rights." DUI

Some of the children also mentioned which rights they had learnt in the project. Some are the rights worked on during the project's training sessions through games and dynamics; others are the rights they have worked on in their own Kids Hubs, both in the sessions' preparation and execution. The most frequently mentioned rights are:

"Right to play, right to eat, right to sleep, right drink, right to go to school, right to be heard." DUI

"The right that all children should have the same rights." NKK

"I learnt so much about protecting children from exploitation, the right that we worked in our Kids Hubs." ESPLAC

The children also emphasise that the project has made them aware of the **status of their rights**. At the beginning of the project, some children commented that they realised they were unaware of many of their rights. Other children said that throughout the project, they have realised that it is not only they who are unaware of their rights but that there is a general **lack of knowledge about children's rights**, even though it is the responsibility of all citizens to know and guarantee them. This last statement is considered one of the lessons learnt. Along these lines, they express that they have learnt the **importance and responsibility of adults** in guaranteeing children's rights, which has surprised them. In this sense, some children pointed out that the project has taught them how to claim their rights have been infringed.

"I learnt some rights I didn't know and how important they are." ESPLAC

"I have learnt that not everyone knows about children's rights." NKK

"I understood that my rights should be respected in my home and in my school." ÖKF

“Well, I haven't really learnt a lot about it since we've already been over the topic a lot of times. But I did learn that I could be forced away from home if my parents didn't treat me right or took drugs.” DUI

“I learnt that we need to inform and empower people about children's rights.” SFYU

Learning about teamwork. They consider that the experience has posed great challenges for them as a group, especially when organising themselves. This has led to moments when they have had to generate organisational strategies, distribute roles, and dedicate time to building team cohesion and taking care of one another. In this regard, one child pointed out that it has been a very interesting experience to learn among peers.

“KGR gives us a lot of opportunities to work in groups.” ESPLAC

“We have learnt about working together.” ÖKF

Learning about participation. According to the children, the project has enabled them to learn to find ways of communicating with other children and adults to express an idea clearly and intelligibly for the listener. Along these lines, one child said that the project enabled them to talk about rights in public.

“Learning new things about participation.” Arciragazzi

“I learn to explain things about children's rights in public.” NKK

Learning about language. Another learning the children recognise refers to is English as a means to communicate and interact with other participants. Many children inform that speaking English with their peers has improved their level. They also emphasise that they wish they had a higher level because, very often, they could not express everything they might want to. One child also says that the project has helped them improve their communication skills in English and their native language.

“I learnt to talk in English more naturally.” DUI

“I have learnt to speak better English and Finnish.” NKK

Cultural learning. The international meetings have directly and indirectly involved cultural exchanges. Discovering from children from other cultures is another learning experience mentioned by the children.

"I learn many things about children from another culture." ESPLAC
"New things from the culture of other children." NKK

6.1.2. Key elements for learning

In connection to the previous section, one of the questions about their learning focused on identifying what elements had helped the children learn about children's rights.

Dynamic activities. Most children mention activities as the most influential element of their learning. By activities, they mean those moments when they carried out activities and workshops of a formative nature on children's rights. They comment that these spaces allowed them to talk about rights and reflect and become aware of the state of their rights.

"Activities based on children's rights." Arciragazzi
"I think the workshops where the adults told us about children's rights."
 SFYU
"When I started attending our meetings in Denmark we were told a lot about our rights." DUI

Another activity to which many of the children make special mention is the **games** that the educators prepared in various sessions and the games that the children themselves prepared in the Kids Hubs in national groups. The games' preparation in the Kids Hubs was an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the rights in question. They also point out that the Residential Training meeting was crucial for learning about rights and how to organise themselves as a group.

"Through the games that we have experienced in first person."
 Arciragazzi
"The games we played were for me the key element in making me understand children's rights." ÖKF

Another child comments that the **theatre** they organised to raise awareness of rights was a key element in learning about their rights. The preparation of the theatre and the staging were key experiences in their learning in this project.

“For me, the theatre we did in Austria was a key element that helped us learn more about Children Rights.” DUI

Peer-to-peer work. They recognised having had many opportunities to learn from other children both nationally and internationally thanks to teamwork throughout the project. Thus, the children point out that their peers have been fundamental to their learning.

“Working together with other children.” SFYU
“Other superheroes.” NKK

Accompaniment of educators. Another key element, repeatedly mentioned, is the educators as a fundamental pillar of their learning. They consider that the people who have accompanied them in this project have been decisive. One child says that the group members felt cared for by the playworkers, as they were always concerned about their feelings. They also say that they took care to facilitate understanding and that they were always willing to help them.

“The educators take care of us in the project. They have facilitated help all the time.” ESPLAC
“Mentors teaching and explanations” Slovenian Falcons
“Good educators” NKK

Child-friendly materials. Concerning materials, one child values the document on rights explained in child-friendly language very positively. They recognise that, unlike other documents on children's rights dominated mainly by complex and formal verbal language, in the document that they rewritten the rights, the language was more straightforward and precise, which made it more intelligible.

¹ Each partner organisation form a national group of 15 children, so-called Children's Rights Superheroes.

"The written piece of paper that tells all the rights in a language children understand. It makes it a lot easier because they don't use complicated words like adults do." DUI

"Rewriting the list of children's rights was really important, otherwise we couldn't understand anything." ESPLAC

Breaks. Another interesting observation is about the free moments between children from different countries in the meetings. One child comments that an important space for them was the free time between activities, the "breaks". The child points out that they were able to informally discuss with other peers aspects that awake their curiosity or worried them about children's rights in these spaces.

"During the breaks when I spoke with the other kids about our rights."
DUI

6.1.3. Capacity for self-organisation

At the individual level

At the individual level, children generally find it difficult to identify whether their capacity for self-organisation has improved. Some children express to consider that the influence of the project on their capacity for self-organisation has not been relevant. Others consider that the project has indeed promote experiences and challenges that have made them improve their self-organisation.

"I don't think my capacity for self-organisation improved so much."
ESPLAC

"I don't know which ones, but we have done new things and it has increased my capacity for self-organisation." Arciragazzi

"Yes, it improves in many aspects." NKK

The following are the elements that the children consider key in improving their capacity for self-organisation.

Autonomy and independence. They point out that the project has made them gain autonomy and independence. For many children, the project has meant travelling alone without family for the first time. They mention that this has made them feel autonomous and independent. They also experienced this feeling at the international meetings when they participated individually in the activities.

“I have learnt to be away from my family on these kinds of trips.” SFYU
“It has made me more independent to participate individually in the activities, in particular during the international meetings.” Arciragazzi

Self-confidence. Children express that confidence is another key element that makes them consider that their capacity for self-organisation has improved. They consider that they now feel more confident when expressing themselves in front of many people, i.e., speaking in public. They value that the project has helped them express their opinions along these lines. They believe that having reflected on the importance of children expressing their ideas and having talked about the importance of respecting the diversity of opinion has encouraged them to share their thoughts and lose the fear of being judged. They also feel that they have gained confidence in expressing themselves in a language that is not their own, i.e., they feel more fluent in English.

“I also got more confident by standing and talking in front of a large group.” ESPLAC
“It has made me more independent and more confident to express my views.” Arciragazzi
“I speak a lot more and my English has become more natural. I can also speak in front of a larger group of people because I have learnt to not care because most of the time they do understand.” DUI

Willingness to meet and collaborate with others. Having to interact with new people has made them open their minds. The project has allowed them to get to know and deal with people they did not know and who, in some ways, have different ways of doing and thinking. Having shared moments with new people and valued these experiences positively has made them value the importance of losing prejudices before getting to know people.

“To think differently and be more open to meeting new people/kids.” DUI

Courage. As a result of their self-confidence and willingness to meet and work with other children, they say they have gained courage in daring to interact with other children. Throughout the project, they have constantly had to contact the children and participate in the activities they developed. They also say that the project has also given them the courage to continue to have new experiences of this kind in the future.

“Increased the level of courage to interact with people.” ÖKF

“The project has given me courage to live new experiences.” NKK

Self-knowledge. Another element that stands out is self-knowledge. One of the children values that the project's challenges have allowed them to realise what their abilities and skills are. There is no doubt that the children have experienced different moments and activities as a challenge where sometimes they have felt insecure and nervous, they have had to practice and prepare a lot, but the project has also allowed them to realise what they are capable of doing.

“Positive because I understood what my abilities are.” Arciragazzi



Kids from WcF dynamizing their Kids Hubs.

At group level

Group functioning and management. At the group level, in contrast to the individual level, the children are more aware that the project has positively influenced their capacity for self-organisation. Most of the children assess that their group self-management capacity has improved significantly.

“As a group, it improves so much.” ESPLAC

“Well, we have done things together and we have learnt about the things we did.” NKK

Acquisition of group organisational techniques and strategies. They consider that the experience has required a lot of teamwork and, therefore, they have worked a lot among themselves. Thus, they value that they have learnt to work better as a group and, specifically, they state that the skills they have improved the most are the organisation of ideas and planning. In several project moments, especially in the Kids Hubs, they experienced a co-design process. First, brainstorming and then a concretisation of the workshops based on these ideas.

“As a group, now we know more strategies to organise events, workshops, and other things related to our interests”. ESPLAC

Personal attitudes favour efficiency and group atmosphere. Concerning teamwork, they also rate highly that they have acquired personal attitudes to work better collectively. They say that they have learnt to be more respectful of one another and to have a collaborative attitude when working towards the same objective. Along these lines, one child said they felt very supported by the whole group. Thus, we confirm that respect and companionship have been values fostered in this experience. They also observe that they have felt more confident speaking in public as a group.

“We have learnt to respect each other. I notice that we respect each other a lot more now!” ESPLAC

“We have learnt to respect each other. I notice that we respect each other a lot more now!” ESPLAC

“We have had good team spirit, which has helped working together and it has been easy to be in the group even though I didn't know anybody before.” NKK

"The group has supported me." ÖKF
"Some may also have gotten more confident." WcF

Link to the organisation. One child makes a significant contribution by saying that the project has helped them get closer to their organisation. Thus, they highlight those meaningful participatory experiences that make them feel part of and link them to those projects and organisations that deploy them.

"It has helped us get closer together in our own organisation." DUI

Proactive attitude and perception of transformation. Finally, another interesting contribution is that of a child who appreciates that the project has made them feel that they could influence something. The children have perceived the transformative nature of participation in the first person.

"I think people in my group are learning new things and we learn that we can influence many things too." NKK

6.1.4. Empowerment moment

In the questionnaire, we also asked them about a moment when they felt empowered during the project. Despite the children pointing to different moments, all the situations mentioned have a common denominator: they are experiences that have involved public speaking and group self-organisation..

Residential training was a pivotal moment as for many of them it was the first time they had led the organisation of an event. They feel that it empowered them to realise that they had managed to self-organise as a group to plan a day of activities and dynamics for other children and adults. It is fair to mention that many children feel that this to be the project's highlight.

"The two days in which we organised the workshops and we decided the games for our Kids Hubs." ESPLAC
"Work-group planning the Kids Hubs." ÖKF

Kids Hubs. Many children consider that Kids Hubs Day is key for their empowerment. On that day, they addressed an audience of unknown people to whom they had to present the activities, inviting them to participate and making the whole day more dynamic. In this line, one child pointed out that it was very motivating for them to carry out the tasks that educators usually do.

“Explaining activities and games to other children and adults.” WcF

“When we went for a two-days camp to a house only our group and we created many activities about children's Rights for Kids Hubs.” ESPLAC

“In our Kids Hubs, we played different games. It was really nice when people I felt comfortable with were around me and we just played there :).” NKK

“Having the educators' role during the Kids Hubs: explaining activities, making groups to play...” ESPLAC

Addressing adults in positions of responsibility. Likewise, one child said that the most empowering moment was when they had to address the board of directors of their organisation to explain the project. In this vein, another child mentions that the day they presented the project to the Prime Minister of Denmark was very important.

“The time where I had to speak in front of our main board in our organisation” DUI

“When we went to present the project to the minister.” DUI

International meetings. During these times, the children had to address other children they did not know to introduce themselves, share ideas and proposals, and lead an activity. Moreover, in some cases, they point out that they did not ask for translation and, therefore, spoke in English - a language that was not their own.

“When I had to interact with other people” Arciragazzi

“Speaking in front of everyone in Barcelona” DUI

“During the campfire in Austria I got to talk with new people/kids. Also, it was intimidating that everything on the trip was in English so we had to overcome the language barrier.” DUI

In this regard, the children point out that it empowered them to travel to another country alone, without family. They also appreciate that they were very motivated by the realisation that they were meeting with children from different countries to discuss the same topic - children's rights. Finally, they mention the activities of the International Meeting in Dobriach (Austria), where children in small groups proposed different social media campaigns to claim and raise awareness of their rights.

"The trip to Vienna, because I traveled to another country without parents." SFYU

"The international meetings, because we can talk to people from other countries about ONE topic in common." ESPLAC

"The best moment so far was the group meeting in Kauniainen." NKK

Free time. Moreover, children point to moments of free time when they interacted with children from different countries without adults and without translations.

"When we were in Barcelona in our free time talking and socialising with other kids without the need for translations." Arciragazzi

"When I approached strangers to talk with them and asked if I could play with them." DUI

6.2. Adults perspective

6.2.1. Children's learnings

In order to identify concordance and discordance, we thought it appropriate to ask the educators what learning they considered the children had acquired in the course of the project. These are listed below.

Children's rights. Most adults consider that the most significant learning for children is to know their rights. On the one hand, they emphasise that in some groups, KGR has helped them know the existence of rights, realising that they have many more than they imagined, and on the other hand, to confirm the rights that they have long been working on in their organisations.

"First and foremost that they have rights and the existence of UNCRC."

WcF

"Children have learnt far more rights than they imagined." Arciragazzi

"They have confirmed the rights we taught them during our work with the UN children's rights convention which we have worked with for many years now." DUI

The importance of guaranteeing children's rights. They appreciate that the project has also been an opportunity to learn about the importance of rights and how they can be fulfilled. They have realised that guaranteeing children's rights is not a gesture of adults, but that, legally, there are rules that defend and protect them for democratic reasons.

"I think they have learnt that it is not just a simple gesture from adults to treat them nice but that there are actually rules protecting them. I also think they learnt that there are more rules than they thought." DUI

"Children learn that, even though adults are adults and have more power, children's rights should be respected." ESPLAC

The international commitment to children's rights. They identify that the realisation of children's rights is an international commitment. So, the children have adopted an international perspective, identifying that, despite the broad consensus, not all children have the same rights. Thus, the project has enabled them to understand the state of rights in other countries and realise that there are discrepancies in their guarantee.

"They have learnt that not all adults agree with every single right in all situations (e.g., the right to privacy). They have learnt that there are lots of different ways to stand up for their rights/call out when they are not being recognised. They have learnt that children's rights are an international issue and others care about them too. Some countries do not respect children's rights." WcF

"Children have identified which rights are guaranteed and which are not, and they have also noticed that some of the rights they have, children from other countries or even from the same country do not have them" ESPLAC

Training strategies on children's rights. Another learning is the strategies they have acquired throughout the project. The educators consider that the project has given them tools to teach rights to other children and adults and realise that children's rights education is a way to advocate for them.

"They have also been able to learn and realise that they can organise and lead activities." WcF

"Children have learnt how to train other children and adults about Children's Rights." ESPLAC

6.2.2. Key elements in children's learning about their rights

Self-organisation and leadership of a participatory experience. Most of the adults point out that the moments in which the children had to self-organise and lead activities are considered a fundamental element in the learning obtained. On the one hand, they point out that the creation of dynamics was a great challenge for the children, as they had to work in groups, share ideas, choose and design a proposal collaboratively and plan it to put it into practice. On the other hand, the implementation was also a key moment. The children had to lead the formative workshops on children's rights, adopt various roles, promote the participants' engagement, mediate debates, and transmit key ideas based on their knowledge of children's rights.

"They have learnt to formulate and create activities for Kids Hubs. They have learnt to use the tools, that have to think out of the box when they are learning and teaching about their rights." DUI

"Creating the workshops" NKK

"Create dynamics to train other children and adults about children's rights, and also put them into practice." ESPLAC

Engaging activities. Similarly, some adults highlight that the activities in which they have had to reformulate and create content have been key. In particular, one educator points out that it was key to dedicate a space to rewrite the children's rights in a more pleasant language, which would facilitate their understanding and, concurrently, could be a learning tool for other children.

"Realising that they did not understand children's rights and having to rewrite them was an important moment in their learning. Therefore, the document with the rewritten rights was a key element for the project." ESPLAC

Spaces for conversation and debate. They highlight that the moments of group discussion about children's rights and their status in the different contexts that make up their daily lives were crucial. Likewise, they point out that the spaces for conversation about experiences in which the children considered that their rights had been guaranteed or violated were also a key milestone for their learning.

“Group discussions to talk about children's rights through their personal experiences.” WcF

“The meetings where they taught each other different parts of their rights.” DUI

Materials and strategies used. Another element considered essential was the sources of information used during the project. In particular, many adults pointed out the value of games and visual tools, such as videos and photos. They value that working on rights more experientially and visually has been crucial for the children's motivation.

“Playing games with the focus on KGR instead of just adults talking about it.” ESPLAC

“Watching videos from UNICEF / taking part in international and national activities and workshops.” WcF

“Games and visual tools.” WcF



Kids from Arciragazzi preparing a game for their Kids Hubs.



Kids from NKK dynamizing an activity in their Kids Hubs.

6.2.3. Adults' learnings

To consider the views of the educators who accompanied the children during the project, we asked them what lessons they took away from the experience. These are set out below.

Adult engagement in the realisation of children's rights at local and international levels. Some adults say KGR has allowed them to learn interesting facts about children's rights, such as which states have not signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child and how rights are guaranteed in some countries and contexts. In addition, they mention that the project has allowed them to reflect on adults' commitment to guaranteeing rights and the importance of their role. They also consider that both children and adults have gained an international perspective on children's rights, as the project has allowed them to learn about experiences that address children's rights in different countries. Also, like children, adults argue that the UNCRC Child-Friendly Versions need to be more accessible to children and that children find it complicated to understand.

"More about children Rights, for example, the countries that have not signed the UNCRC." WcF

"How to assure some children's rights, for example, children's right to be listened to." ARC

"I have learnt that there are a lot more organisations that actively work on children's rights on almost a daily basis." DUI

Enrich the discourse on the importance of guaranteeing children's rights. One educator points out that all these formative learnings on children's rights have allowed them to feel more confident and consolidate the discourse on the importance of children's rights, gaining more confidence to advocate and lobby in the political arena as well as to promote them on social media. In addition, educators underline that they also have learnt that most advocacy work is done for children and not by children. They have realised that children want to design their own advocacy plans, and that they enjoy doing it.

"We have talked with politicians and other people about children's rights for years but now we are more confident and are better prepared to promote on social media and other platforms to promote children's rights." DUI

"Most advocacy work is done for children and not by children. We have realised that children want to design their own advocacy work." IFM-SEI

To value children's self-organisation and leadership skills. Educators also mention that the project has been an opportunity to learn that children have many organisational skills, more than they could imagine. Likewise, it has become evident that they are not lacking in willingness to get involved in demanding their rights nor in creating mechanisms to raise awareness among other groups to disseminate children's rights.

"Children have a good ability to organise, decide, or work on their own, and sometimes adults aware of it." ESPLAC

"I've noticed that all too often we underestimate children's ability to make, think, and decide." ESPLAC

"Just how much these young people are self-aware, and ready to take on the world." Arciragazzi

"In IFM-sEI we were amazed at the leadership level the children had and developed during the project." IFM-SEI

Opportunity to learn from the children. The educators point out that one of the more significant experiences has been to learn from the children themselves. Expressly, they point out that they have learnt many strategies for training in other rights from all the proposals that the children themselves have created. Thus, they emphasise that they will use many of the tools and materials created by the children in other future experiences in which they will have to train other children and adults on children's rights.

"This has given me very much possibility to design workshops for very young children and therefore challenged my thinking." NKK

"Learn from kids games and activities, what is important to design activities for kids." ESPLAC

"I have learned from children how to facilitate international work, they pointed out to us how to be better, and we have improved drastically in running international activities for children." IFM-SEI

Acquisition of communication skills in English and overall improvement in using this language. Another learning they take away from the project is language. As in the case of the children, they point out that the experience has improved their English level so that they now feel more confident in participating and sharing experiences with other people from other countries. In terms of language, they also point out that the project has made them realise that, although in some cases it makes dialogue difficult, language does not make it impossible to exchange ideas and dialogue.

"I have learnt that language is not a barrier for sharing ideas and working together, and that there are a lot of ideas that can be learnt from young people when they put their heads together." WcF

6.2.4. Children's capacity to self-organise

The children's capacity for self-organisation was one of the study's aims. We asked the adults what improvements they perceived the children had made after the project's experience.

Confidence in public speaking. The educators point out that the project has generated multiple spaces for conversation, which have facilitated children to express themselves. They have repeatedly put their communication skills into practice and lost their fear of speaking out. In particular, they perceive that the children have lost their shyness while gaining confidence in speaking in front of adults. The educators consider that the children feel more capable and prepared to lead activities and face debates. They exemplify the statement by recalling the leadership experiences of the Kids Hubs, and in the case of de DUI-LEG og VIRKE, they mention the day the Superheroes presented the project to the Prime Minister of Denmark.

"They could realise their voice is being listened to, and now, they try to speak more in debates." ESPLAC

"I think that the oldest of the kids are pushed outside their comfort zones and actually found out that it was not as bad as they thought and feared, and, therefore got the confidence boost to go and do more of it in their own time." Arciragazzi

"I can clearly see that the older kids have gone from super shy to now confident enough to speak in front of the prime minister and ambassadors and crowds to promote their rights and opinions." DUI

Identify organisational skills and nurture them. The educators detect that thanks to dealing with children's rights and being allowed to organise and lead the Kids Hubs, the children have been able to value the organisational skills they already had and acquire new ones. They also highlight that having experienced this organisational and management process allowed them to learn what was necessary to prepare and deliver a session, and make suggestions for improvement for organising future activities. One educator stated that they now perceive some changes; for example, when the educators consult the children, they can organise themselves to make a collective decision.

"Creating the session plans in October/November helped the young people to see what was needed to organise and deliver a session." WcF
"Organising Kids Hubs, they realise their leadership capacity, and, also, they learn which strategies they can improve and what they have to do to continue self-organising." ESPLAC
"They have also learnt skills to make decisions in a group. When we ask them a question, they organise themselves to make a decision as a group." ESPLAC

Taking responsibility and gaining autonomy. They appreciate that, both directly and indirectly, the children have lived experiences that have led them to take on responsibilities, whether it was taking care of their luggage on the international meetings trips or having to organise a training workshop on children's rights in the Kids Hubs. All of this has made them more autonomous and independent.

"Empowering young people naturally helps them in every aspect of their lives. Even just being responsible for their own suitcase or leading a game during a session gives young people strength and a better understanding of the world around them." WcF

Proactive attitude. They also note that the children feel more empowered when faced with a right violation. The project has made them realise that they can act on their own. They begin to have strategies to deal with these situations, such as detecting that a right is violated and demanding to speak up.

“They know that they can take action and not wait from somebody to show them the correct way or to represent them.” DUI

Becoming role models for younger children. The older ones inspire the younger members of the organisation. They are very curious about everything they have done. For all these reasons, they value that the project has influenced the same age group level and, at the same time, other groups. The project has not been limited to the experience of one group in particular but permeated the whole organisation.

“The oldest of our kids have definitely been helped by the tools they got during the project, and the younger ones have gotten a seed planted that we can nourish so it can blossom and be a powerfull KGR promoter in the future.” WcF

“The younger ones I see are inspired by the older and, therefore, they are getting curious about getting to know more about children Rights.” DUI



Superheroes group photo in Italy.

7. KEY FINDINGS

- The children consider rights as a need, as a norm and justice, as the basis of human well-being, living together, and as freedom.
- They state that they do not know all or even most of their rights, and indicate the need for children's rights to be presented more understandably, using child-friendly language, and consider children's needs and interests in their design.
- They do not know where to go to find information about their rights.
- The children consider they should have rights because they are humans just like adults, for protection, to be recognised and guaranteed, for having specific needs at a specific stage of life, and for well-being.
- The children consider that children's rights are little known in civil society, which means that people are unaware of and uncommitted to promoting and guaranteeing them.
- The children affirm that in their free time organisation, rights are guaranteed but they do not think this is the case in their school.
- The process of self-analysis has made it easier for children to understand that the guarantee of rights is unequal between countries, and that not all children in the same country have their rights guaranteed. The situations of violation of rights that they recognise in their immediate environment are gender identity, sexual orientation, and functional and ethnic diversity.
- The actions they propose to promote and guarantee children's rights are awareness-raising and dissemination, training, development of child-friendly materials, and creating a collaborative network.
- The six methodological strategies that favour the leadership process in the Kids Hubs were planning and organisation of the action, knowledge and self-knowledge, conception, decision-making, sharing and pooling, and evaluation.
- The development of the Kids Hubs, according to the children, had three distinct moments: pooling, preparation, and action. Evaluation has not been recognised as a moment but incorporated as a fundamental element in the experience.
- The roles that the children recognise that they have developed to carry out the Kids Hubs are presenter, facilitator, technician, material arranger, observer, and time controller.

- The children identify the importance of preparation when deciding what, how and by whom each task will be carried out.
- The children identify some difficulties for planning and the importance to improve it to feel comfortable and confident.
- The children diagnose that dedicating the first part of the project to rights training has been key to empowering them and making them feel capable of training other people.
- They identify that the dynamic activities, the work among peers, the accompaniment of the educators, the child-friendly materials, and the free time have been the key elements of their learning during the project.
- The leadership of a participatory experience implies an improvement in the emotional development of the children, specifically in their self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-knowledge.
- Experiences that involve self-organisation as a group and public speaking make them feel capable of driving beneficial change for children. Self-organising and leading a participatory experience empowers children.
- Being trained in rights and participating in different debates on the state of rights and how rights are being fulfilled allows children to gain confidence in speaking out in public to advocate for them.
- Children's experiences of self-organisation and leadership invite adults to question their adult-centric view. At the same time, they allow the adult to integrate a wide range of strategies and activities designed by the children, which favour children's meaningful learning.
- Sharing the experience with the whole organisation has allowed the rest of the agents to be aware of the experience, give value to the children's effort and dedication, and turn them into referents for other children in the promotion of their rights.

8. EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides elements, from the children's point of view, to increase children's leadership in children's rights education and elements for the effectiveness of children's empowerment in disseminating their rights among citizens. The results of the study and the experience gained favour the contribution of the following recommendations at the European level:

01.

Having Children's Rights as a curricular content of compulsory education at schools and leisure time education. There is a need to give relevance to this content as an essential part of the knowledge children acquire. Children have to be aware of their rights and be able to stand up for them.

02.

Provide institutions with child-friendly materials about children's rights. They have to be presented more understandably, using more child-friendly language and consider children's needs and interests in their design. Children's rights need to be taught in schools, and materials on the subject should be available in all libraries. Leisure time organisations should count on these materials.

03.

Strengthen the recognition of children as agents of change to increase knowledge and guarantee children's rights among the rest of the citizenry. The study has shown that children can promote their rights and do so in an effective and transformative way. It is proposed to increase training and awareness-raising campaigns on rights, including children as active agents in their configuration and execution. Their inclusion guarantees actions and contents of interest to them, and a language and sensitivity that is difficult to achieve from an adult perspective.

04.

To train teachers in children's rights so that schools are spaces where rights are guaranteed, promoted, and exercised. Children have stated that school is where their rights are not guaranteed. It is urgent to introduce actions to reverse this perception and experience. One of the first actions is to train teachers so that the reference frameworks for relationships with children are based on guaranteeing rights and strengthening their involvement in decision-making spaces. Beyond training, it is necessary to ensure that school practices are developed in the child's best interests. It would be helpful to promote Kids Hubs within schools.

05.

Participatory practices where children are involved in shaping an action for the defence of their rights go beyond giving a voice and favour co-responsible collaboration between peers. Co-design processes are developed from reflective, deliberative and action strategies triggered by defining roles that facilitate articulating the agreed action. It has been acknowledged that the strategies the children found in the different moments are knowledge and self-knowledge to conceive action, plan and organise, devise, make decisions, pool and share, and evaluate in order to adjust action. Defining the application of the action makes it necessary to identify roles and experience them to develop them successfully, and putting them into action is part of leadership and empowerment.

06.

Collaborative experiences to defend rights strengthen the construction of the identity of a citizen with rights while at the same time configuring a multiplying network with different connecting nodes to guarantee and promote rights. It has been verified with the children's contributions around the self-analysis that leading the Kids Hubs has increased their knowledge of children's rights and, above all, that, afterwards, they recognise that they are capable of doing it and assume it as a responsibility. It is proposed that the promotion and defense of their rights opportunities for children to lead actions and projects in defence rights should be increased. The actions broaden and reinforce the webs of agents that act as collaborative networks within the Convention's groundwork, boost the recognition of children as subjects of rights as well as their agency, and ensure participatory actions to take place

07.

The co-design methodology, together with the application of the designed action, favours the process of self-analysis, increasing children's self-recognition as bearers of rights and active subjects in their advocacy by creating a leadership scenario for participation where one learns by listening and reflecting, thinking and deliberating with others, simulating and experimenting. Co-design immerses children in self-awareness and self-knowledge, as well as in an ongoing process of decision-making evaluation considering the action design and its implementation. Co-design increases opportunities for self-analysis in a way that is naturalised and integrated into design leadership and participatory practice. The co-design methodology encourages reflection, recognition and internalisation of the necessary components to advocate for and promote children's rights.

08.

Institutions and educators should enhance moral and emotional development in participatory practices by ensuring a friendly environment and giving space and time for children to prepare and act in leadership and participation. Educators should encourage children to feel comfortable and confident by stimulating group cohesion to help them feel relaxed.

09.

Educators should help children to improve planning (to know where to start, to know the steps, to divide roles and tasks equally, to decide what each person would do and what for) and take the lead in the preparation, arranging the materials, and setting the explanation of each activity. They should help them cope with the set-up of time and deal with uncertainties about the number of people attending the event, either on the part of the lead or organising teams or the participants. They should also help them understand the activities and advise them on how to get the participants' attention and engagement in the activities they plan and lead. They should offer them tools and methodologies to dynamise the activities in digital environments. They should also teach them to cooperate, work in teams, communicate assertively and respectfully, be flexible, improvise and adapt to different situations, have fun and feel motivated to lead and participate.

10.

Ensure that children's rights are a trending topic in mainstream media and social media. Children's rights should be featured in mainstream media, such as television, news and programmes, radio and press, and in social media such as Twitter, Instagram and Tiktok, to name the most widely used among adults and young people.

8. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Arciragazzi - Italy (Arciragazzi), DUI-LEG og Virke - Denmark (DUI), Associació d'esplais catalans - Spain (ESPLAC), Kinderfreunde - Austria (ÖKF), Nouret Kotkat-Finland (NKK), Zveza društev sokolske mladine - Slovenian Falcons Youth Union - Slovenian (SFYU) and Woodcraft Folk - England (WCF).

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