



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS DURING CORONA DAYS IN DIFFERENT DISTRICTS OF ISTANBUL

Research Report
Summary for Children



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We are grateful to all the children whom we consulted and who shared their ideas with us while we prepared this booklet.



We are also thankful to all the children and the caregivers who participated in this research! Without your participation, we would not be able to do this research.

Greetings!

How are you? How are your Corona days passing? Since March 2020, people are going through changes in their everyday lives all around the world. We were curious about what kind of changes children experience during these days. So, as four institutions from four different districts of Istanbul we came together and did a research. These institutions are: Başak Culture and Arts Foundations, Sulukule Volunteers Association, Tarlabası Community Center and Small Projects Istanbul. Are you familiar with these institutions? Don't worry if you are not. In this booklet we will try to introduce them to you.

When we finished our research, we wrote a 15 pages long report. This is a very long report and it is rather difficult for the children to understand. For this reason, we prepared this booklet which you are reading now. In this booklet, we explained the information about the research in the section titled "We are explaining our research in 10 questions". Additionally, in order to clarify the meanings of some of the words we used, we prepared information boxes titled "What is this?". We also placed the words of the children who participated in the research in the speech bubbles.

The research process and results made us think that it is necessary to remind everyone of their responsibilities when it comes to protecting children's rights. We are curious about what you will think once you read about this research.

We hope that you enjoy the read...

What is

Corona days?

Corona is the short version of coronavirus which is a type of virus. This virus can cause the disease known as COVID-19. Since December 2019 this virus is spreading all around the world rapidly. The virus was first detected in Turkey in March 2020. Since that day, Turkey has been going through a quarantine process. Following the spread of the virus, some workplaces were closed, people started working from their homes and children began to attend distance learning. We will refer to the period of Corona pandemic as the Corona days.

Let's begin with learning new things or remembering what we already know!

What is

Children's Rights?

Children's needs are different from the adults' needs. For this reason, the rights specific to children are called children's rights. Children has many rights such as rights to education, health, play, protection, access to information and participation. These rights are written down in an agreement and this agreement has been signed by the highest number of countries. An agreement is a document where the promises made by those who sign it are written down. The name of this agreement is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We will use the short version of this agreement, UNCRC. The countries who signed this agreement have made a promise to make sure that children can enjoy their rights written down in this document. According to this agreement, any person below 18 years of age is a child.

What is

Research?

When we use the word research, we mean that people collect information about a topic they are curious about and share it with others. People can research different topics such as the lifespan of dinosaurs; prevention methods from corona virus or the children's experiences at home. In each research different methods such as excavations, surveys or interviews are used to collect information. After collecting the information, the researchers write reports to share the results with others.

What is

Quarantine?

This word has two different meanings. First, it means that because of a contagious disease people are not allowed to enter or leave a country. Second, it means that people who are sick are kept in isolated spaces and are not allowed to have contact with others for a period of time to prevent the spread of the disease.

WE ARE EXPLAINING OUR RESEARCH IN 10 QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1: Who are we?

Four institutions did this research together. Each institution has been working with children in different districts of Istanbul. The children we work with sometimes face difficulties in using their rights. With our work we try to support children's access to their rights.

If you want to familiarize yourself with these four institutions, you can take a look at the information provided below.



Başak Culture and Art Foundation (BCAF): This institution was founded in 2003 in Kayışdağı. This is a place where people who have migrated to Turkey live in large numbers. BCAF works with children and youth who have migrated or have been affected by migration. It runs projects which aim to support children's equal participation in society and to facilitate their self-expression.

For detailed information: <https://basaksanatvakfi.org.tr>



Sulukule Volunteers Association (SVA): This institution was founded in 2010 in Karagümrük. It organizes various workshops in schools focusing on sports and bodily movement, rhythm, storytelling, photography, social and emotional learning. With these workshops, this institution aims to empower children, socially and psychologically. SVA also aims to create children-friendly spaces in the association through participatory methods that foster children's creativity. It works together with a vast range of children with different needs as well as school administrators and teachers, psychological counsellors, and parents.

For detailed information: <http://www.sulukulegonulluleri.org>



Tarlabası Community Center (TCC): This institution was founded in 2006 with the aim of empowering the people who are living in Tarlabası district and supporting them in accessing to their rights. The people who live in Tarlabası are mostly Roma, Kurdish and migrants who come from different countries. TCC primarily carries out projects to create safe spaces for children and to support their access to their rights. TCC is known by the children of Tarlabası as "small school", "play school" or "the center". For detailed information: <http://www.tarlabasi.org>

Small Projects Istanbul (SPI) was founded in 2015 in Fatih. It mostly works with Syrian children and their families. It aims to facilitate and ease the process of living in Turkey for the children and their families. It also aims to support them in accessing to their rights.

For detailed information: <https://www.smallprojectsistanbul.org>



QUESTION 2: Why did we do this research?

Our lives change at times of disasters or pandemics. We thought that Corona days can make children's lives more difficult. Instead of guessing the answers to questions such as "What are children experiencing during Corona days?" or "Can the children access to their rights during Corona days?" we wanted to ask the children themselves for answers. This way we can both make children's voices be heard and demand from everyone -the state, the mukhtar, the municipalities- to fulfill their responsibilities by reminding them what needs to be done.

QUESTION 3: How did we do this research?

We all previously knew the children we work with and the adults who live with them. We prepared a list of the children and their caregivers whom we decided to interview. We called these children and their caregivers on the phone and asked them various questions. We did the first round of phone calls in April and the second round in May. In both rounds, we mostly talked to the same people. The reason why we called them twice was because we wanted to learn if any changes occurred in their lives.

What is a

Caregiver?

Some children do not live with their parents. In this report, the people who live with children and are responsible for their care are called as "caregivers".

QUESTION 4: What were our priorities during this research?

While doing research it is necessary to make sure that children are able to answer to questions comfortably and do not suffer from any harm. To achieve this, we paid special attention to the following:

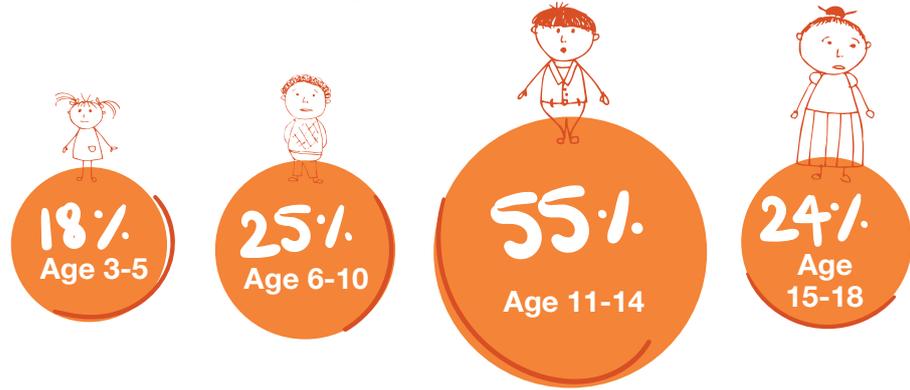
- We informed both the children and their caregivers who participated in the research and asked for their permission.
- We prepared the questions carefully to avoid any possible harm to children.

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- We kept the information of the people we interviewed confidential.
- Children we called on the phone for this research most of the time spoke to us in the presence of adults. If we were able to carry out this research face to face, then we would have made sure that the children were alone during the interviews because they can have hard time answering questions when adults are present.

QUESTION 5: Who did we interview for this research?

The children whom the abovementioned institutions work with and these children's caregivers participated in this research. In the first round of interviews we talked to 123 children and 83 caregivers. In the second round we did interviews with



122 children and 85 caregivers. We talked to children from different age groups ranging from 3 to 18.

The children who participated in the research live in following districts of Istanbul: Fatih-Karag mr k, Fatih-apa, Fatih-Mevlanakapı, Fatih-Fındıkzade, Ataşehir-Kayıřdađı, Sancaktepe-Sargazi and Beyođlu-Tarlabařı.



QUESTION 6: What were the questions asked during the research?

In order to learn about their experiences during the Corona days, we asked children questions on the following topics:

- How they pass their time,
- How they feel,
- What they dream of,
- What they think about access to education, information and media, and their right to play.

We asked the caregivers:

- What they do during the day,
- What makes them worried during the Corona days,
- What kind of needs and demands they have,
- What kind of changes they experience economically,
- What they think about their children's access to right to education, health, information and play.

QUESTION 7: What did the children we interviewed during this research say?

We can gather children's expressions under three headings:

- Distance learning and Education and Information Network (EBA)
- Playing at home, spending spare time and communicating with friends
- Access to information and internet use

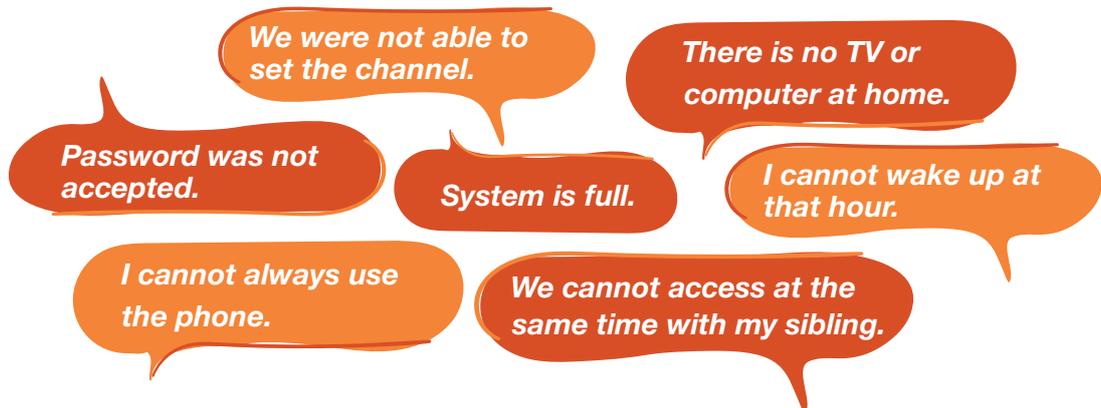
Children's thoughts on distance learning and EBA

Age 9

- If the adults asked your ideas about how distance learning should be, what would you say?
- They would never ask us about how it should be like, they would not listen to us.

Of the 122 children who participated in our research, 27 said that they have never used EBA, and 16 said that they stopped following the courses. Only 36 children said that they use EBA regularly.

- Children who want to use EBA, shared their reasons for not following the courses offered by EBA with the following words:



- Some of the children who are following EBA or who stopped following it after some time stated that they were not happy with the content of EBA.

Age 13

It is as if EBA is made for very small children. After speaking to you I gave it another try, but I could only stand it for five minutes.



Distance learning is a bit fast when compared to normal education. I would have liked them to explain the topics more slowly and more in depth.

Age 15

- Almost half the children who participated in the research said that they were not able to communicate with their teachers regularly and effectively.

Age 10

It would have been better if I could see and talk to my teacher. Don't you think that the teacher should call the children and ask them about how they are doing?

We only talk about questions that are relevant to the courses. I ask my teacher only the difficult questions. For easy questions, the teacher says to me 'We covered these topics, do them yourself.'

Age 11

- We also heard children expressing that they missed their school, teachers and school friends.

Before, I used to wish for holidays to come, now I wish to go to the school.

Age 10

- Children said that during the distance learning process, in addition to the TV, books and notes can be sent to the houses. They also suggested that methods such as video chat might help them communicate with their teachers and feel like they are in the classroom.

Children's thoughts on playing at home, spending spare time and communicating with friends

Age 15

Before I thought that my life was boring, but now sitting at home is more boring.



- The children told us that they did not do much at home apart from using devices such as the phone or the computer.

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- They said that they could not enjoy their right to play and rest at home. The reasons they put forward for this situation were lack of space, toys, stationery, and heavy domestic chores.

*I am helping my mother;
I wipe the floors.*

Age 9

Age 11

When we play in the living room, they get mad at us for making noise. I cannot play football at home. Once Corona is over, I want to go out and play football.

I am so bored... I do not have a room. Wherever I go, they tell me not to stay there or to clean up the room... I think the school was swell.

Age 13

- Some children said that staying at home increased their communication with their family members.

It was not possible for me to be close with these people [meaning the family members]. I was addicted to the phone. I used to go to school, and we did not get to see each other much. Now, we are having our meals together, we speak and understand each other. They figured me out. I think this was the best side of the quarantine.

Age 16

- The children told us that us that they got together in the neighborhood and communicated with their friends from window to window or over the internet. 23 children told us that they did not have any contact with their friends.



- Half the children told us that they went out on the permitted days. There were others who said that they went out during the lockdown. 19 children stated that they did not go out even on the permitted days either because their family members did not let them, or they chose not to.

Children's thoughts on access to information and internet use

Age 10

Since Corona is a bit bad, I think people should be more careful speaking about it. Children might get scared; they should talk about it carefully.

- In April, 21 out of 100 children said that they did not have access to internet, in May 6 out of 100 children said that they did not have access to internet.
- 99 out of 122 children who participated in this research said that they received information about Corona from TV news or social media. 11 children stated that they did not receive or do not want to receive any information about Corona.

Age 9

I heard in the news that the virus is spreading very fast. We should constantly wash our hands and should not stay next to each other.

I am not interested in Corona anymore. Nobody around me speaks about it any longer. I act as if it does not exist. When I hear the news about Corona, I say 'Ah, I am bored.'

Age 11

QUESTION 8: What did the caregivers we interviewed during the research say?

We also asked some additional questions to the caregivers who participated in this research. These questions were sometimes about the economic conditions of the household, sometimes about the physical conditions and sometimes about access to the healthcare services. The answers were:

- Majority of the caregivers said that due to Corona they either lost their jobs or their income decreased.
- They told us that due to economic problems they have hard time in covering the needs of the children or other family members.
- 19 out of 85 caregivers we interviewed stated that they applied to social support offered by different institutions but did not get it. The caregivers stated that they still need social support for their needs.

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- Almost half of the caregivers said that if a member of the family were to be a Corona patient, they do not have a separate room to isolate that person.
- Most of the caregivers stated that they are hesitant about going to hospitals and they could not get their medications.

QUESTION 9: What did we learn from this research? What are the results?

In this research, based on what the children and the caregivers said, we understood that the children have difficulties in enjoying the following rights:

- Life survival and development of the child (UNCRC Article 6)
- Access to information and media (UNCRC Article 17)
- Right to health (UNCRC Article 24)
- Right to support for sufficient life conditions (UNCRC Article 27)
- Right to education (UNCRC Articles 28, 29, 30)
- Right to rest, play, culture and arts (UNCRC Article 31)

QUESTION 10: Based on the research results what do we suggest for children's access to their rights?

- The state is responsible for protecting children's rights because it has signed the UNCRC agreement. For the children to enjoy their rights which they could not during the Corona process, everyone, including the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health as well as municipalities, media and all the associations and NGOs that carry out works with children, should take action immediately. All those who are responsible, while fulfilling their duties, should take into account the four main principles of UNCRC.
- Children's needs and conditions differ. For instance, not every child has access to a phone or a computer at home. For this reason, it is necessary to carry out works that facilitate each child's equal access to and exercise of rights.

- The problems in services that affect children’s development (education, play, health) should be solved immediately.
- Children’s thoughts and views should be taken into account in emergency situations such as Corona. Children should be sufficiently and appropriately informed. Children should be able to comfortably speak about their problems and voice their demands.



**Four Main Principles
of UNCRC**

No discrimination
(Article 2)

Best interests of the child
(Article 3)

Life survival and development
(Article 6)

Respect for children’s views.
(Article 12)



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